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Date of Birth — Date de naissance August 29, 1953	Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance U.S.A.
Permanent Address — Résidence fixe 54 Raglan Ave. #5, Toronto, Ontario M6C 2L1	
Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse Un Lac de Sang: French Images of the Orient 1800-1900	
University — Université U. of Alberta	
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Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade 1983	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse Regna Darnell

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UN LAC DE SANG: FRENCH IMAGES OF THE ORIENT 1800-1900

by

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ARTS BUILDING

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
EDMONTON, CANADA
T6G 2E6

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(SIGNED) Deborah Root

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

54 Raglan Ave. #5
Toronto, Ontario
M6C 2L1

DATED July 26 1983

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Regna Darnell
Supervisor

CEMoore

Date 22 June 1983

Abstract

This study extends structuralist Marxist theory to account for ideologies of colonialism and nationalism. To this end, the ideological dimension of French Orientalist painting is investigated to determine to what extent this genre both justified and prepared the way for French colonialism in the Middle East and played a role in the creation of a French national identity. It is argued that Orientalism produced colonialist ideologies not by injecting viewers with propagandistic ideas, but rather by employing traditional images of the Orient to provoke in the French viewer an unconscious recognition of Self through its inversion in the Other. In this way the Orient became a *camera obscura* through which French self-identity was constructed, and the colonial relationship became the lens through which the East was perceived.

Orientalist painting also helped to explain and naturalize colonialism through reference to Muslim barbarism and French civilization and by employing a complex of assumptions about the Orient ultimately deriving from Crusader ideologies. A Manichaean view of East and West implicit in many paintings reinforced notions of Muslim tyranny, anarchy, and fanaticism, creating an Orient that essentially demanded conquest. The concept of a civilizing mission emerged, given impetus by the belief that the East existed in a state of decay, which could only be ameliorated by the establishment of French rule.

The way in which ideologies are mediated and transformed by aesthetics also is addressed. Rather than viewing art as an epiphenomenon of a material base, the artpiece itself is investigated as a productive site of ideological meaning. Attention is directed to particular conventions and codes that determine treatment of Orientalist subject matter, and the concept of symptomatic absence is employed to determine the implicit presence of unseen elements. At the same time, Orientalism also is analyzed in terms of the institutional determinants affecting its production. A sample of twenty-five works is included to illustrate the discussion of ideological themes present in the genre as a whole.

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I. Introduction

The ideological dimension of French colonialism in the Middle East played a crucial and frequently overlooked role in the preparation for and justification of these enterprises. While internal economic and political dynamics determined the direction of colonial adventures, and military actions enabled them to be carried out with varying degrees of success, colonialist ideologies structured French perceptions of the Orient in such a way that conquest, pacification and, in Algeria, settlement was naturalized and considered a duty in the service of civilization. These ideologies, given concrete form in the *mission civilisatrice*, were produced by aesthetic and imaginative works as well as by official publications and speeches. In particular, the Orientalist genre of painting created ideologies of colonialism and nationalism through its presentation of the Muslim world and implicit reference to European superiority and domination.

This study addresses two broad theoretical concerns: first, how knowledge about subordinate and ethnically distinct peoples is produced and disseminated in a colonizing nation and, second, how a specific body of aesthetic work - Orientalist painting - creates ideological meaning in a given social formation. Concepts derived from recent advances in the theory of ideology inform the approach utilized here, in particular the reformulation of human subjectivity developed within the Althusserian variant of Marxism. While a number of relevant analyses incorporating these concepts have emerged (cf. Wolff 1981; Barrett et al. 1979; Macherey 1978; Balibar 1974; and others), these focus almost exclusively on intrasocietal class relations rather than on colonialist and ethnic ideologies operating intersocietally. Writers such as Frantz Fanon (1963, 1965, 1967) and Edward Said (1978) have investigated colonial relations, but neither has evaluated fully the role of ideology in constituting colonialist and nationalist subjectivities, although Fanon's discussion of the effects of colonialism on the consciousness of subordinate groups has proved fruitful. Louis Althusser's formulations are extended in this study to permit questions of colonialist and other intersocietal ideologies of domination to be addressed.

The theoretical problems delineated above are approached through analysis of French Orientalist paintings of the nineteenth century. Briefly, artists working in this genre painted scenes of the Muslim East, including Algeria, for an eager European public; as a result, harem girls, cruel potentates, Arabian steeds and the like ran riot in the annual Paris Salon for over a century. Essentially a French genre, Orientalist painting initially was inspired by Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign and the Greek war for independence; the popularity of such works increased markedly with the conquest of Algeria in 1830 and subsequent expansion into the Algeria hinterland. By 1861, the influential critic Théophile Gautier could write:

> Utilitarian spirits might say that Algeria is useless and unprofitable for France. Those of us who are not economists love it for what it has given art. It has brought a new element. The journey to Algeria has become as indispensable to painters as the pilgrimage to Italy. There they will learn about the sun, study the light, find original characters, customs, and primitive, Biblical attitudes (1861 in Jullian 1977).

Towards the end of the century the popularity of the genre declined, despite the founding of the *Salon des Peintres Orientalistes Français* in 1893, and much of the traditional subject matter of Orientalism was assimilated into the Symbolist movement. Although the occasional odalisque appeared in the work of French painters after the turn of the century, Orientalism could no longer be said to comprise a distinct genre.

Three Propositions

I offer three propositions, in descending order of specificity, which will act as organizing principles through which the subject matter of this study may be addressed:

Proposition One: Images of Muslims produced by Orientalist paintings referred in a complex manner both to ideologies relating to the French colonial presence in the Middle East, and to ideologies of nationalism and patriotism being promulgated inside France: the Orient became a *camera obscura* through which French self-identity was constructed. These ideologies are analyzed as social processes existing in materially circumscribed practices.

The theoretical formulations underpinning this proposition are discussed in the following chapter, although I wish to introduce the main points here. Althusser (1971) has argued that ideology constitutes human subjectivity through a process of 'hailing' or interpellation; the subject is created when the individual uncounsciously (mis) recognizes her/himself in the ideologies she/he sees as being addressed especially to her/him. I am suggesting that a colonial relationship causes a somewhat more complex process to occur. Subjectivities of race, ethnicity and religion are constituted *in relation* to an opposing group, and because of this inherent opposition, ideologies of colonialism work by permitting a (mis) recognition of Self in its inversion in the Other. The constitution of Self by ideology, and the particular relationship of Self to Other, determines the way in which the Other is perceived. In a colonial relationship, the Other becomes what the Self is not, and vice versa. Orientalist painting was ideological not only because it presented the Muslim as Other, but because the French viewer (mis) recognized her/himself as the Oriental's opposite: heroic, progressive, and, above all, 'civilized'. This perceived inversion of civilized qualities in the latter contributed to the construction of French nationalism, that is, nationalistic subjectivities, and the constitution of 'Frenchmen' as a racial, ethnic and religious entity. It also allowed particular interpretations of the colonial relationship to be maintained in France.

Images of the East produced in Orientalist paintings also explained and naturalized French colonial enterprises. Said asserts that Europe "invented" the Orient and that knowledge produced by disparate fields of discourse, including aesthetics, comprised a "corporate institution...for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (1978:1,3). The ideologies generated by Orientalist art created an East that essentially demanded conquest, and in many paintings the French colonial presence was referred to both explicitly and by its symptomatic absence. Moreover, themes apparent in these works alluded to and exchanged meanings with ideologies produced in other fields of discourse. Thus, Orientalist paintings and the ideologies produced therein can be seen as part of a complex of social processes addressing questions both of French nationalism and of the relationship between France and the Muslim world.

Considering ideologies as social processes better enables us to take into account the multiplicity of ideologies which may be present in a body of artistic works. The content of Orientalist paintings cannot merely be reduced to colonialism, nationalism, and attendant ideologies; other influences, such as aesthetic conventions derived from the romantic movement or ideas emanating from Christian theology, also may be identified in Orientalist works. Göran Therborn stresses the complexity:

> It is most fruitful to see ideologies as social processes...in these continuous processes ideologies overlap, compete and clash, drown and reinforce each other (1980:vii).

While art is viewed as a process capable of creating social meaning in a network of interdependency with other social practices, a deterministic economism is rejected, and it is maintained that the production of cultural artifacts has an internal dynamic of its own which exists in relative autonomy from the material substructure of society. It is in this sense that art is analyzed as 'production', rather than as a practice which passively reflects ideologies produced elsewhere, and for this reason that attention is directed to the artpiece as a site of social meaning.

The final implication of Proposition One concerns the apparatuses and practices in which ideologies are produced. The analysis of the ideological dimension of art also must examine the institutional framework surrounding the production of aesthetic works, for example, the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, the highly popular annual Salons, the wishes of clients commissioning paintings, and so on. I will attempt to demonstrate that the institutional art world of nineteenth-century France was dominated by the State and by various ruling factions and that these played a crucial role in determining what kinds of images were disseminated to the public. Orientalism essentially was an academic genre, despite the occasional use of 'avant-garde' painting techniques, and that these works met with the approval of the institutional network is indirectly supported by Jullian's statement that "between 1840 and 1880 and Orientalist stood a good chance of getting rich" (1977:28).

Many painters were financed by the French government and, during the conquest of Algeria, artists were commissioned by the king to document the war.

Proposition Two: As suggested, the Muslim East was presented in ideology and its manifestation as Orientalist painting as the antithesis of French civilization. The Manichaean view of East and West derived from Crusader ideologies and was expressed in the typification of the Orient as violent, tyrannical, fanatical, lascivious, cruel, anarchic, and decadent. During the colonial period, new interpretations gravitated to these centuries-old meanings.

While the notion of the *mission civilisatrice* had its roots in eighteenth century thought, the view of the Islamic world as Other originated in Crusader polemics. The Muslim Orient presented a genuine threat to Europe in the Middle Ages, and the necessity of unifying Western resolve against the Infidel encouraged the rise of a stereotype which stressed the enemy's inversion of Christian moral and social values. Gallup suggests that the relative egalitarianism and lack of feudal hierarchy characterizing the Muslim social structure was seen as particularly threatening by European churchmen and political leaders.

Themes characterizing the medieval view emphasized the anarchic nature of the Muslim polity as well as Muslims' supposed propensity towards violence, sexual adventure, and religious fanaticism. This stereotype has existed virtually unchanged 'from the eleventh to the twentieth century" (Daniel 1966:xvi), although explanations of these perceived traits shifted over time, for example, as in the eighteenth century when Eastern 'despotism' was interpreted in terms of ecologial and social causes (Rodinson 1974:40).

For example, directly prior to the conquest of Algiers the medieval, Manichaean view of Christianity/Islam was revived in writings produced in France calling for political action in the area; references were made to the unsuccessful French crusade to North Africa in the thirteenth century, and the pamphlet issued to the army by the French war ministry read:

> For a long time philosophy, humanity, and religion have been demanding the annihilation of a power whose every maxim is a constant insult to all morality, all civilization. There can never have been a valid excuse for tolerating Algiers (1830 in Gallup 1973:186).

In Orientalist paintings these ideas were expressed by an emphasis on scenes portraying acts of tyrannical cruelty, such as depictions of institutionalized tortures and executions. As well, an interest was apparent in scenes of religious rituals emphasizing the blind fanaticism thought to typify Islam. Connotations of Muslim barbarism ran through many of these works, as evidenced by the presence of frenzied, nude warriors and severed heads in paintings depicting battles and in the scenes of inhumanity expressed in portrayals of slave markets. Notions of Muslim lasciviousness were manifested in a fascination with harems and white slaves; these subjects also could allude to cruelty in the treatment of captivity and interest in harem execution scenes.

Throughout the colonial period, the Orient continued to be presented as the antithesis of civilization, which translated into a call for conquest. While Enlightenment theories of progress encouraged some to attempt to extend the 'benefits' of French culture to the Muslim, the conviction that Oriental barbarism existed in opposition to French civilization proved to be a cornerstone of colonialist ideology.

Proposition Three: Ideological themes existing in regard to the Muslim world were mediated and in some cases transformed in Orientalist works by aesthetic conventions and codes. The tendency of some artists to idealize the Orient and to present it as an exotic spectacle relates to an aesthetic sensibility and its influence on artistic presentation rather than to a change in the perception of characteristics thought to typify the Muslim.

There was another side to the view of the Orient as fanatical, barbaric Other. Whereas medieval Christianity believed contact with Muslim society to be contaminating, by the late eighteenth century the East was perceived as compellingly exotic; for example, the same Oriental cruelty that formerly was a cause for fear became a means of titillation. Moreover, as Rodinson points out, the "increasing poverty [of the East] spiced its charms" (1974:43). While the concept of exoticism may be related to a cosmopolitan appreciation of cultural differences, it more frequently occurs as a somewhat paradoxical idealism of traits believed to characterize peoples coming under the influence of Western colonial expansion (Forster 1982:22). The paradox lies in the contradiction between the destruction of native social formations resulting from the colonial process and the sentimentalized, nostalgic view of these in the colonizing nation. Moreover, while some of the perceived traits idealized and treated as exotic influenced styles of dress, architecture, and manners, in this instance others were precisely those used as justifications for the 'civilizing mission': tyranny, decadence, barbarism, and so forth.

Differences between Muslim and European societies were exaggerated to enhance the exotic nature of the former, as has been pointed out by Said (1978) and Daniel:

> The relatively late [i.e., post-eighteenth century] tradition of treating Islamic things as exotic - a tradition which both fed the imperial relationship and fed on it - made Muslims seem more different than they need be (1966:481).

Many Orientalist painters presented the East in a romantic, idealized fashion, and the most immediately obvious example of this tendency can be found in depictions of Oriental women. French artists of this period particularly were fascinated by harem life and the ideas of beautiful, victimized slaves; in these paintings violence frequently was associated with sensuality (Jullian 1977:96). The notion of the Oriental tyrant, living in splendour and wielding absolute power, also thrilled the French sensibility; an archetypal example can be seen in Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827) (Plate 4), which is characterized by "voluptuous, gory exoticism" (Praz 1933:322). The East also was idealized through an evocation of classical antiquity, for example, a contemporary critic perceived Achilles and Hector "under a burnous" in one of Chassériau's paintings of Algerian leaders (Gautier 1853 in Sandoz 1974:59).

Rather than reflecting a modification of French attitudes towards the Orient, the idealization of the exotic in painting and literature relates to the profound influence exerted by the romantic sensibility on aesthetics. Romanticism was expressed by a characteristic attitude towards decadence, eroticism, the exotic, and the 'primitive', manifested in a conscious cultivation of the unusual and macabre and a nostalgic longing for the lost illusions of bygone ages. Many French romantics depicted the barbarism and corruption of ancient Rome and Byzantium as well as the Orient, and in their aesthetic treatment of these essentially imaginary civilizations exhulted in their magnificent, glittering decadence. Thus traditional views of Muslim barbarism, tyranny, licentiousness, and so forth were subjected to a romantic aesthetic transformation, which affected treatment of these themes in Orientalist paintings.

Emphasis on the 'exotic' and idealization of certain perceived Muslim traits in Orientalist paintings can mask the fact that the essential typification of the East remained unchanged; overriding emphasis still focused on presumed differences between the French and Oriental worlds. Exoticism was merely a new treatment, or elaboration, of themes that had characterized the European view of the east for centuries.

The thematic elements cited above have been identified in Orientalist paintings by art historians, but to my knowledge no genuinely critical studies of the genre have been produced to date, with the exception of a very recent, brief article on Gérôme (cf. Boime 1983). The majority of works have tended to treat Orientalism as a phase of nineteenth century French painting best looked at in terms of artistic technique and colour (cf. Jullian 1977; Fine Arts Society 1978; Harding 1979; Verrier 1979; Alazard 1930). The choice and presentation of subject matter has neither adequately been analyzed nor related to other ideologies produced in regard to the Middle East. Rather, explanations offered for the popularity of the genre tend to emphasize the appeal of a "sunlit world far away" from the grey, industrial north (Jullian 1977:28; see also Harding 1979:74; Fine Arts Society 1978:7; St. Clair 1973:31; and others). While it undoubtedly is true that the desire for escapism played a role in the rise of the genre, evidence for a relationship between pictorial themes and ideologies emanating from other practices is strong.

This study is organized as follows:

Chapter Two provides an overvier of the theoretical concepts underpinning an analysis of the ideological dimension of aesthetic production. The notion of 'culture' existing in anthropology and other disciplines is considered and the concept of ideology is offered as a potentially valuable analytical category, particularly in regard to questions of human subjectivity and the way social knowledge is formed in individuals. Attention then is directed to studies addressing the relationship of aesthetics to ideology and the role of the former in producing social meaning. Finally, I discuss the methodology employed in this study.

Chapter Three provides an historical overview of French attitudes towards the Orient. Medieval antecedents of views present in the colonial period are examined and the influence of eighteenth century notions of progress on interpretations of the Muslim world is evaluated. Attention is directed to ideologies surrounding the conquest of Algeria and the contradiction between the ideals of the *mission civilisatrice* and the devastation brought to the country by the colonial army; French attitudes towards their role in the Middle East and towards Muslims are evaluated against the reality of conquest and occupation.

Chapter Four examines the French art world in regard to institutions, such as the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, the Salons and government *bureaux*, which circumscribed the production of Orientalist painting. Attention then is directed to the intellectual and aesthetic milieu characterizing the century, with particular emphasis placed on conventions of romanticism and their effect on Orientalism.

Chapter Five discusses the history of the Orientalist genre and the principal artists painting Eastern scenes. The popularity of specific works and their influence on others is considered, and role of individual painters in establishing the genre is described. Finally, attention is directed towards the artists' position in French society.

In Chapter Six a selection of twenty-five Orientalist paintings is analyzed in detail. Discussion is provided in regard to the primary ideological themes present in the works, and the reworking of these by aesthetic treatment and conventions is discussed. Major themes are listed.

Chapter Seven seeks to develop in detail the causal processes obtaining among colonialist and nationalist ideologies and the meanings produced by and manifested in Orientalist paintings. Themes characterizing the genre are discussed in detail and related to attitudes maintained in France towards the East, and the role of these in constituting French subjectivity is evaluated. The way in which aesthetic treatment reinforces ideological meaning is addressed, as is its effect on the internal and external contradictions apparent in many of the artpieces. In conclusion, the findings of this study are summarized, and their implications for further research are discussed.

II. The Theory of Ideology

A large body of social theory has addressed the relationship between the generation of ideas or 'knowledge' and the social formation in which they are produced. This concern has been formulated variously, but in general social theory has sought to explicate why social agents do as they do and believe as they do. It is suggested here that recent studies of ideology and the production of culture undertaken within Marxism offer a theoretical orientation of potential value to studies seeking to determine the way in which social knowledge is formed in human subjects and to the analysis of ideological elements found in cultural products, such as painting, literature, mass media, and so on.

This chapter delineates the relevant theoretical concepts underpinning the analysis of the ideological dimension of art. The first section addresses the theorization of 'ideology' and its relation to the concept of 'culture'; the reformulation of human subjectivity is discussed, as are the processes by which ideologies work in complex social formations. Attention then is directed towards the specific instance of aesthetic production and to the applicibility of theories described in the first section to concrete studies such as this of social meanings produced by paintings.

A. Culture versus Ideology

In the last decade or so, assumptions underlying the notion of 'culture' found in anthropology and other disciplines has been challenged by and the concept of 'ideology', subjected to various reformulations, has been offered as a more adequate analytical category (Johnson 1979a:52; Burris 1979). The work of Louis Althusser has been particularly influential in this regard, with writers in literary criticism (cf. Macherey 1978; Eagleton 1976), sociology (cf. Poulantzas 1978, 1975; Castells 1978) and anthropology (cf. Feuchtwang 1975; Terray 1972; Godelier 1972, 1973) employing elements of his theoretical formulations. In this section, the traditional view of culture briefly is described and the theoretical foundations of the Althusserian concept of ideology are delineated; the discussion concludes with an evaluation of attempts to retain the notion of 'culture' as a category complementing that of ideology.

The criticism of 'culture' centres around the idealism seen to characterize a concept which essentially focuses on the conscious subjectivity of individuals in their social world. This focus suggests that social reality be analyzed as the 'experience' of social actors, and ideologies, myths, and so on are viewed as independent variables only tenuously connected to the social formation rather than as objective practices grounded and to a certain extent determined by the mode and relations of production of a given society

(Feuchtwang 1975:63). In regard to historical studies of complex societies, Johnson notes:

> Culturalist histories belong to that family of sociologies that seek to grasp social phenomena in their own terms, in their forms of appearance to the world. The problem with such sociologies is that they abandon the ground of 'determination' or explanation. The most radical culturalisms refuse questions of structure or process altogether, focusing on small-scale inter-subjective transactions in a circle of accounts (1979a:65-66).

While some interest has been directed towards the connections between symbolizing activities and power relations in society (cf. Cohen 1974), the influence of Durkheim's conception of the social whole and notion of 'collective consciousness' has pointed non-materialist social research to an emphasis on shared values, norms, and the like. His view of collectivity found expression in the work of the British functional anthropologists such as Evans-Prichard and Fortes, which stressed societal consensus and solidarity rather than questions of power, domination, and conflict (Firth 1975:33). Thus, 'culture' came to be seen as the general way of life or world view which promoted social cohesion, and the ideas or systems of ideas shared by social actors were analyzed in terms of the latter's subjective views of their social experience.

Within social theory of this type, the concept of ideology has existed alongside that of culture, but generally employed in regard to complex societies as an aspect of the 'sociology of knowledge' approach initially developed by Karl Mannheim (1953). Mannheim assumed the primacy of the human subject as the focus of analysis, and in effect viewed ideology as a body of ideas produced by an elite (Merquior 1979:30). Ideologies, then, became 'interest-bound interpretations' of reality challenged by interpretations or biases held by other groups within the society; conceptions of the social formation held by social agents are relatived and become what Mannheim calls 'perspective', with different groups holding different perspectives, each with its own canons of validity (Connolly 1967:71). Social conflict is seen as a clash of ideas or perspectives.

The notion that world-view is determined by one's position in society, and comprised of a specific set of assumptions, has been very influential in studies undertaken within this culturalist framework; analysis is directed towards determining the social position of the subject. The weakness of this type of analysis rests upon an inadequate conception of the subject and, by extension, of the way knowledge is formed in social beings. It should be pointed out that elements of this view of ideology have been apparent in studies undertaken within the Marxist tradition as well, particularly in regard to notions of subjectivity; 'culturalist Marxist' studies have been criticized for implying that social groups or classes can be reduced to interpersonal relations and for asserting that social relations may be analyzed as the 'feelings and perceptions' of exploited groups (Laclau 1977:33; Johnson 1979a:64).

A Reformulation of Ideology

Althusser and his followers broke both with the idealist view of culture as a system of shared values and the classical Marxist conception of ideology as a body of inadequate ideas or a distorted reflection of reality, that is, 'false consciousness'. Rejecting the deterministic economism of many traditional Marxist interpretations of the base/superstructure metaphor, as well as the Hegelian notion of 'expressive totality', Althusser has insisted upon the recognition of the complexity and heterogeneity characterizing the social formation, which he conceptualizes as consisting of three levels, or instances, each with its own relative autonomy and internal contradictions. Two of these, the political and ideological, are roughly comparable to the classical superstructure, but rather than being reflections of the base, they are seen as "necessary conditions" of the third instance, the economic (McLennan et al. 1978:79). The ideological level and its multiplicity of practices, then, has an internal dynamic which cannot be reduced to the requirements of the material substructure; moreover, rather than being viewed as a reflection of the latter, ideology is considered a productive practice, generating meanings in a manner not unlike that in which products are created from raw materials (Laing 1978:89).

The concept of ideology, employed in this sense, has been defined as consisting of:

> ...a specific objective level of a *relatively*

> *coherent* ensemble of representations, values, and beliefs; just as 'men', the agents within a formation, participate in an economic and political activity, they also participate in religious, moral, aesthetic, and philosophical activities. Ideology concerns the world in which men live, and to their own activity, including their own economical activity. The status of the ideological derives from the fact that it reflects the manner in which the agents of a formation, the bearers of its structures, live the conditions of existence, i.e., it reflects their relationship to these conditions as it is lived by them (Poulantzas 1978:206)

The essential difference of concern here between Althusser's conception of ideology and that of Mannheim and those following his sociology of knowledge approach lies in the former's reformulation of human subjectivity, which has proved crucial to analyses of how specific ideologies 'work' in concrete situations.

Ideology and the Subject

The theoretical anti-humanism underpinning Althusser's reformulation of human subjectivity derives broadly from 'structuralist' principles and a critique of the concern of Hegelian Marxists with the subjective dimension of the political process and class struggle. Laing notes:

> If there can be said to be any common perspective amongst the variety of 'structuralists;, from Lacan to Levi-Strauss, Foucault to Althusser, it lies in their resistance to what Foucault names as the essential feature of the contemporary *épistémè*, the placing of Man as the origin of social practice (1978:94)

The decentering of Man has directed attention towards external determinants and structures constituting subjectivity and the ways in which elements comprising particular social formations "provide the conditions in which ...[specific] subjectivities are possible as categories and assumptions" (Feuchtwang 1975:65). Althusser argues that subjectivity is created by ideology, which 'recruits', or constitutes, and transforms individuals into subjects:

> Ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects (1971:73)

Ideology not only tells people what reality is, it tells them who they are; to paraphrase Hirst, the subject is not an essence but an effect (1979:58).

The self is constructed through the individual's unconscious 'recognition' of her/himself in the ideologies she/he sees as being addressed especially to her/him; this (mis) recognition, affecting the individuals' view of Self and of the world at large, in effect produces an "imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1971:162). In this sense, ideology 'works' by provoking a (mis) recognition on the part of the individual in a process whereby the Self is constituted; the subject, then, is seen actively to intervene in this process by her/his (mis) recognition rather than passively being injected with a view of reality or a body of ideas, containing varying degrees of truth or falsehood, in a manner akin to the workings of a hypodermic needle (Gitlin 1981:154).

In this conception of the constitution of subjectivity in ideology, the notion of misrecognition is central. Althusser has adapted Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory of the role of the 'mirror-phase' in ego formation. Lacan argues that the child first recognizes her/himself in the "pure image...and pure form" found in a mirror; this Other, that is, the image:

> first establishes identity, as the subject, in a mirage, discovers for itself a unity. Man's first recognition of himself is a radical *misrecognition*; here clearly, it can be seen that identity is a difference, that the same is an other (Roussel 1968:68).

The unconscious recognition of Self in the Other has implications for what Therborn calls "positional ideologies" (1980:27), that is, those addressing subjects in regard to their place in the world in relation to other social entities such as different ethnic groups or the other gender. While Therborn suggests that positional ideologies exist in conjunction with alter-ideologies, the process by which these operate has rarely been discussed in theoretical work on ideology, an ommission I hope to remedy in this study. The Self/Other dichotomy as applicable to ideologies of colonialism and ethnicity is elucidated in the final chapter, which analyzes the ideological role of Orientalist painting in constituting subjectivities in France.

The relative coherence of the ideological instance in a social formation is not attributable to internal logical consistency or to single source for the notions contained therein, such as a particular class, but to the complex way in which ideological interpellations refer to others:

> When a familial interpellation, for example, *evokes* a political interpellation, a religious interpellation, or an aesthetic interpellation, and when each of these ideological interpellations operates as a *symbol* of the others, we have a relatively unified ideological discourse (Laclau 1977:102).

Individuals are addressed by a variety of ideologies emanating from several sources, and the subjectivity of each individual consists of numerous subjectivities, for example, a single person might be constituted as a Frenchman, an artist, a male, a Christian, and so on. These interpellations can be contradictory, but their overall efficacity in reproducing the relations of production of a given society relates to the linkages among them and the way in which they are able to present themselves as a unified, coherent discourse (Poulantzas 1978:208-09).

A final note on the decentering of the Subject as the focus of investigation concerns its relevance to concrete studies of art as ideology; emphasis on external structures of ideological interpellation suggest that theories of artistic creativity must be re-evaluated and the active role of the viewer, who is constituted by the work, be stressed (Wolff 1981:129).

The Materiality of Ideology

Althusser and his followers object to the mind/matter opposition they see characterizing both traditional Marxist and idealist conceptions of ideology. In their view, this is a weakness of the base/superstructure metaphor, in that ideas can only be treated as epiphenomena. Instead,they argue, ideas should be conceptualized as 'real' because they exist in specific material matrices that have real effects in society:

> ...where only a single subject (such and such an individual) is concerned, the existence of the ideas of his belief is real in that his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material ideological apparatuses from which derive the ideas of the subject. Naturally, the four inscriptions of the adjective 'material' in my proposition must be affected by different modalities (Althusser 1971:169).

The ideological level, or instance, of the social formation is comprised of structured social relations (which are not the same as intersubjective relations), which both affect and are affected by one another. The word 'structure' refers to the materially circumscribed practices in which these social relations are lived. Ideology, then, should be analyzed as lived social relations rather than as a "reflection of social relations in some world of ideas" (Hirst 1979:28). This relates to the proposition which follows below.

Althusser's formulation of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) derives from his view that:

> An ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material (1971:166)

I would prefer, with Therborn (1980:85) and Hirst (1979:15), to theorize the ISAs more broadly as Ideological Apparatuses, because it is not always the State *per se* that controls the production and dissemination of ideology; however, in the case of nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe, the dominance of the State permits use of the term with minor reservations.

ISAs are specialized institutions in which ideologies are realized and through which individuals are constituted as subjects. Althusser has identified several such institutions, or ISAs, including the religious ISA, the educational ISA, the cultural ISA, the political ISA, and so on (1971:143). These operate through practices, for example, schools and churches, and utilize what Therborn calls "affirmations and sanctions" (1980:33), such as expulsion, censorship, awards, and so on, to maintain their hegemony. Other practices may be identified with ISAs: for example, in the case of nineteenth century painting in France, the cultural ISA functioned through annual events or rituals, such as the Salon exhibitions or artistic competitions, as well as through concrete institutions such as the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*.

The complex relationship of ISAs and their practices to the social formation is expressed by Therborn:

> Even though ideological interpellations occur

> everywhere, both discourses and their protecting mechanisms of restriction, shielding, and delimited appropriation - together with the related affirmations, sanctions, rituals, and excommunications - tend to cluster at those nodal points in the societal process which we may call *ideological apparatuses*. These apparatuses are settings of clustered discourse and related non-discursive practices, and settings or sites of ideological conflict. The social organization of discourse entails that a set of ideological apparatuses be structured in a particular way into a system of linkages and interdependence (1980:85-86).

It should be pointed out that although these apparatuses exist as concrete entities, it does not necessarily follow that the process of interpellation is seamless; Althusser suggests that the contradictions inherent in the social formation also are reproduced in the ideologies and that the social 'harmony' produced actually becomes a "teeth-gritting" fit (1971:150). Thus the concept of the Ideological Apparatuses must not be overpoliticized and the structure of apparatuses and practices reduced to the hegemony of a single class. As noted above, interpellations are derived from numerous sources, some of which may contradict each other.

Ideology in general must be recognized as comprising a total system: an analysis of specific ideologies will identify the relevant ideological apparatuses, their plurality of practices (both institutional and ritual), their affirmations and sanctions, and the ideology-bearing artifacts; these then must be related in a broad sense to the social formation as a whole.

Culture Redux

The Althusserian concept of ideology offers an analytical framework within which the process of knowledge construction in social agents may be interpreted. The complexes of social ideas held by individuals are seen to be a result of ideological interpellations which operate unconsciously to constitute subjectivity. But this is only one side of the question of how social knowledge exists in a formation; we also must examine the results of these interpellations, that is, the ways in which ideologies actually are 'lived' by people in society. It is in this regard that the concept of 'culture' can be rehabilitated and retained as a category of analysis; culture, then, is no longer seen to cause or produce complexes of social ideas, but rather becomes the result of the ideological process - the lived ideologies:

> By culture is understood the common sense or way of life of a particular class, group, or social category, the complex of ideologies that are actually *adopted* as moral preferences or principles of life. To insist on this usage is to insist on the complex recreation of ideological *effects* at a moment of the analysis of consciousness.... Ideologies never address ('interpellate') a naked subject. Concrete social individuals are always already classed and sexed agents, already have a complexly formed subjectivity.... Ideologies always work upon a *ground*: that ground is *culture* (Johnson 1979b:234).

The notions of 'common sense' and 'hegemony' developed by Antonio Gramsci (1968) are central to this reinterpretation of 'culture'. Common sense refers to the unsystematic, contradictory body of ideas and beliefs naturalizing the social order held by ordinary people, and hegemony is defined as the process whereby dominant elements in society are able to maintain the consent of other elements to the hierarchical organization of a social formation. Hegemony helps to explain why certain ideas are adopted over others, and common sense provides a means of examining the forms assumed by 'lived' ideologies; in this sense, culture and ideology are two aspects of the same process.

The elaboration of the concept of culture to include Gramsci's notions of common sense and hegemony suggests that attention be directed towards contradictions and discontinuities in social ideas rather than their unities and role in promoting consensus or social cohesion (Johnson 1979a:76). Moreover, this reformulation of culture refutes the view that ideology is a seamless, closed process because the question of acceptance and rejection of specific ideologies may be addressed.

B. Aesthetics and Ideology

Althusser's reformulations of ideology has profoundly influenced studies undertaken in Britain and France addressing the ideological dimension of aesthetic products; Gramsci and Roland Barthes also have had an impact on such studies (cf. Pollock 1982; Thevoz 1982; Wolff 1981; Lovell 1980; Barrett et al. 1979; Macherey 1978; Eagleton 1976; Balibar 1974, to name a few). Although questions of class ideologies have been of central concern, attention also has been directed towards those of gender (Barrett et al. 1979:10), and it is recognized that ideologies are produced or replicated in neither a simple nor an exact manner in artpieces but rather are mediated through aesthetic conventions and codes (Wolff 1981:66). An antireductionist stance is taken by most of these writers, with ideolgies produced by the artwork seen as a transformation of raw ideological material existing outside the aesthetic instance, rather than as reducible to the former (Macherey and Balibar 1981:56).

Art as Production

Following Althusser, then, art is analyzed as a *productive* practice rather than as a reflection of ideologies emanating from the material substructure. As Pollock suggests:

> Not only do we have to grasp that art as a part of social production, but we also have to realize that it is in itself productive, that is, it actively produces meanings. Art is constitutive of ideology; it is not merely an illustration of it. It is one of the social practices through which particular views of the world, definitions and identities for us to live are constructed, reproduced, and even redefined (1982:9).

The recognition of the inherently productive qualities of aesthetic products has led to a shift in analytical emphasis; whereas the sociology of art formerly reduced to work to its social context (Bird 1979), this approach stresses the artpiece itself as a site of social meaning.

The analysis of ideologies produced by the aesthetic work itself suggests that attention be directed not only towards meanings actually present in the work, but, employing Althusser's concept of 'symptomatic reading' (1970), also towards the absences which refer to an underlying structure of ideologies informing the artpiece. This involves a rejection of the work's appearance as a coherent unity; rather, its internal contradictions and unresolved ideological conflicts and elements point to a deeper complexity than is apparent on its surface (Macherey and Balibar 1981:49). Kavanagh explains this process as it applies to textual criticism:

> In the investigation of textual criticism the marks [of strain caused by ideological contradictions] (which can indicate the text's relation to ideology) can be found not so much in those textual moments where events, characters, and opinions are robust and fully formed, but where the text momentarily misses a beat, thins out and loses intensity, or makes a false move....These marks are *there*, on the very page of the text...they are seen but not visible, indeed, they are seen under the very condition of their invisibility....But they cannot be excluded and are not "outside"; or rather, they are excluded *inside*, as the text's own necessary and intrinsic absences. Althusser calls this process of internal concealment the "inner darkness of exclusion" (1981:31).

The notion of symptomatic absence also is applicable to paintings where unseen elements are implicit in the aesthetic treatment of certain subject matter.

Although emphasis on the artpiece is crucial to its complete analysis, neglect of other determinants has led to another re-evaluation: the role of art in ideological signification is central, but undue concentration on the text or painting can lead to analytic sterility. The degree to which institutional factors must be taken into account in any study of art as ideology has been the subject of considerable debate in the literature (Barrett et al. 1979). Recently, discussion has centered around what some researchers see as excessive theoreticism and formalism in some studies of art or literature as ideology; in particular, those employing a semiotic approach have been singled out (Barrett et al. 1979:11, 20; Wolff 1981:29). Writers such as Golding and Murdock call for a re-focusing on material and institutional determinants. Wolff expresses this concern:

> ...ideological analysis [of texts and artpieces] is insufficient if it is not supplemented by an understanding of groups, pressures, hierarchies and power relations within organizations involved in the general processes of the production of culture (1980:30-31).

It is being realized that analysis of a body of artistic work requires attention *both* to ideological components found in the work themselves and to institutional factors, including artistic rituals and the institutional determinants surrounding aesthetic conventions and codes. A study neglecting either area, that is, concentrating on economic and institutional determinants at the expense of an ideological 'reading', and vice versa, will be inadequate.

The Artist and Viewer

Althusser's writings have given impetus to a redefinition of the artist and viewer. This also relates to the current debate in literary criticism about the role of the author, arising out of Barthes' (1977) argument that the Author wrongly has been the focus of study; he suggests that emphasis be placed on the reader. A similar argument has been advanced in studies of painting, with writers such as Hadjinicolau (1978) strongly criticising both the mystification inherent in the notion of artist-as-genius and the focus on the psychology of the artist in many studies.

If Althusser's reformulation of the subject is accepted, it follows that the artist is constituted by ideology, which renders untenable the view that ideologies and other meanings contained in the work of art arise primarily from the imagination of the artist. The artist does not live in isolation, nor does she/he 'create' meanings unconnected from those apparent in the social formation as a whole. Wolff argues that artistic works should be thought of as collective productions:

> ...the collective nature [of painting or writing a novel]... consists in the indirect involvement of numerous other people, both preceding the identified 'act' of production (teachers, innovations in the style, patrons, and so on), and mediating between production and reception. More generally, the individuality of the artist, and the conditions of his or her specific piece of work, are entirely dependent on the existence of the structures and institutions of artistic practice which facilitates the work (1981:119).

Rather than looking at the artist as 'Genius' or documenting biographical data bearing upon her/his work and studying it in isolation, this decentering of the artist necessitates situating her/him in the artistic 'mode of production' and ideological apparatuses relevant to the type of art being produced. This means identifying the institutional structures of production, exhibition, and dissemination as well as the general aesthetic milieu and associated sensibilities, discourses, and conventions. More is involved than the traditional concern of sociologies of art to place the artistic work in its social context, or to demonstrate that the artist is a member of a particular class; while class factors are important, reducing the artist to her/his place in society provides only a partial explanation for the work. Both the artist and the work or body of works must be articulated with other works and practices in society.

Through the process of ideological interpellation, the viewer is seen as an active agent in the artistic process rather than as a passive 'consumer' of culture:

> The reader, viewer, or audience is actively involved in the construction of the work of art, and without the act of reception/consumption, the work of art is incomplete. This is not to say that consumption is simultaneous with production, but that it complements and completes it (Wolff 1981:95).

Analysis involves situating the viewer in such a way as to understand the ideological frames of reference against which the work is read, or, to put it slightly differently, to determine which potential subject is being addressed by the ideologies in the work. For example, a viewer of an Orientalist painting in 1850 will interpret the work according to her/his already constituted subjectivities and to the various ideologies surrounding the French/Algerian situation. Obviously, the reaction to the work will differ according to whether the viewer is, for example, French or Algerian, and so on. Analysis of the situated viewer has nothing to do with the question of a 'correct' interpretation or reading of the work of art; in the sense being discussed there is no 'correct' reading. Rather, the assumption of the viewer as an active agent involves the recognition that the text or artpiece is not frozen, but is continually undergoing a process of re-creation through the interpretations of the viewer.

It must be emphasized that the broad theoretical concepts described above characterizing the analysis of art as ideology still are in the formative stage. Considerable disagreement exists on the precise nature of the relation of cultural production to ideology and the social formation as a whole and basic issues are in the process of being worked out. Still, broad areas of consensus can be discerned. These include:

1. Art is a productive practice which actively generates ideological meanings;

2. Reductionism must be rejected; that is, works must not be reduced to economic determinants or to the hegemony of a single class; questions of ethnicity and gender must be

evaluated in their own right;

3. Analysis of art as ideology must take into account both the ideologies present in the work itself and the institutional determinants surrounding its production;

4. The individual artist is decentered while the active role of the viewer is recognized;

5. The relationship between art and ideology is complex, with ideologies being reworked in the artpiece by aesthetic codes and conventions.

A final note concerns the theoreticism of much of the work described above. A large body of concrete studies of painting has yet to emerge from this approach, reflecting both the relatively recent nature of the theoretical innovations and the difficulties involved in applying highly generalized formulations to specific instances of artistic production. Many of the empirical studies undertaken thus far essentially have been developed to test the validity of the concepts of analysis (cf. Green and Mort 1982; Thevoz 1982). Nevertheless, the recent elaboration of detailed, adequately theorized methodologies by Wolff (1981) and Lovell (1980) point towards a new interest in painting as an instance in the production of ideologies.

Techniques of Analysis

Despite attempts to apply theoretical concepts of ideology empirically, uncertainties remain which can only be resolved through concrete studies. In regard to my work on Orientalist painting, I hope to be able to clarify several questions about the relationship of ideology to visual representation. These include:

1. How can different ideologies apparent in a body of work be analytically separated from one another? This is a particular problem for Orientalism because several ideologies appear to exist simultaneously, including those surrounding religion, ethnicity, class, sex, exoticism, and so on.

2. How may the notion that aesthetic codes and conventions rework ideologies be applied to the complex problems surrounding the tendency of Orientalist painters to idealize their subject?

3. How may these theories be applied more adequately to the question of race and ethnicity; howdo such positional ideologies of ethnicity and religion relate to other ideologies in society?

For the purposes of analysis, I divide the nineteenth century into three historical periods and examine Orientalist paintings accordingly. 1) The first period, 1800-30, falls immediately prior to the conquest of Algeria. The first 'true' Orientalist works were painted at this time (Jullian 1977), inspired by such events as Napoleon's Egyptian expedition and the Greek war for independence. 2) The second period, 1830-70, marks the initial conquest of Algiers and subsequent expansion into the Algerian hinterland. The French army was responsible for administration in Algeria during this period, and their battles with Algerian resistance fighters provoked great interest in Paris. 3) The final period, 1870-1900, marks the establishment of French civilian rule in Algeria, characterized by considerably less intervention from Paris, and the commencement of the imperialist stage in France.

Descriptions of Orientalist paintings are located in two major sources, the art historical literature and the annual Salon catalogues. I primarily consulted art historical texts as these provided detailed information about the genre as a whole and about individual paintings, the context in which they were produced, and their relative popularity at the Salon and with the critics and the general public. The art historical literature also contains photographs of paintings from which it was possible to identify general ideological themes. This literature provides a relatively unbiased selection of major Orientalist works because these texts are concerned with the place of the paintings in the French art world rather than with questions of ideology. Most paintings in Salon catalogues are listed by title only, occasionally supplemented by reviews, and several problems are involved with using these as a primary source of data, including the ambiguity of titles of many paintings, the difficulty in tracking down many of the works towhich the catalogues refer, and the confused nature of categories under which the paintings are listed. Salon catalogues, then, were employed as a supplementary source for the reception of specific paintings at the time of exhibition and as a means of cross-checking conflicting dates and titles.

Twenty-five Orientalist paintings are selected and discussed in detail in Chapter Six, with reproductions provided to illustrate themes identified therein. Following Goffman's approach in his study of gender advertisments (1976), the choice of paintings to be analyzed was not based on statistical sampling techniques, but rather expressed a deliberate selectivity which permitted a sample of works best illustrating ideological elements found in the genre as a whole to be provided. The general representativeness of these twenty-five works was pre-determined by the art historical literature, which assessed their importance and I have attempted to situate these works fully in the context of the French art world. Criteria used in their selection include popularity, standing of the artist, source of commission, and influence of the work on other paintings. The three historical periods are represented, as are the major artistic styles practiced by Orientalists. Paintings clearly expressing specific ideological themes are discussed, but not at the expense of other works where the identification of themes is more problematical.

The writings of influential critics, particularly those of Théophile Gautier, also are examined in order to discover the nature of contemporary reception of the paintings and to determine which aspects of the paintings best portray the French view of the Orient. In order to locate the paintings in the wider social context, historical texts are consulted, as are more specific studies of French/Muslim relations and French attitudes towards Arabs. Studies of conditions surrounding the French art world are made use of. In effect, I consult a variety of literature relevant to the study of Orientalist painting. This allows a comprehensive analysis of painting as production and permits a more forceful identification of ideological themes present in the twenty-five paintings selected for discussion.

III. Historical Overview of the French View of the Orient

A. The Pre-Conquest Period

Medieval Antecedents

The evocation of the memory of St. Louis in 1830 by French officials exemplifies the use of long historical tensions between France and the Orient as a ideological justification for the conquest of Algiers. The terms of reference are illuminating: St. Louis was a French Crusader king who died attempting to reconquer Tunis for Christendom in 1270 (Gallup 1973:175). The image of Muslim North Africa as Other, deeply rooted in French consciousness, is grounded in a concrete and contradictory relationship extending over many centuries. The profound effects of the Crusades upon the development of European attitudes towards the Orient cannot be underestimated, but even more remarkable is the persistence of these attitudes well into the colonial period and beyond.

Rodinson argues that the conception of Islam arising in the Crusader period derived not from European experience of the Infidel but rather from an internal ideological dynamic necessitated by the threat posed by Islam (1974:11). The maintainance of Christian solidarity required that the enemy be stereotyped. The Christian world focused on three broad aspects of Muslim society - "power, sex, and religion" - and essentially characterized Islam as a "sexually corrupt tyranny based on false teachings" (Daniel 1966:xvi). This view was dominated by a conceptual framework that had as its main tenet the belief that the very nature of Islam called for the violent destruction of Christianity (Gallup 1972:90).

During the Middle Ages, Muhammed was characterized variously as a magician and as an opportunist who wanted nothing more than personal power and an excuse to engage in sexual promiscuity (Rodinson 1974:13). For this reason, Islam was seen as inherently deceitful. The Muslim polity also was considered to be steeped in violence (Daniel 1966:23), in part because of the supposedly tyrannical nature of Islam, but also because Muslim society lacked a hereditary nobility and changes in ruling factions were seen to be accompanied by unimaginable unheavals, such as assassinations, palace revolts, and so on (Gallup 1973:163). The presumed sexual self-indulgence of Muslims was a primary element of the European stereotype as well; this related both to a fascinated horror of polygyny on the part of Europeans and to the belief noted above that Muhammed created Islam in order to indulge his sexual appetite (Daniel 1966:5). Daniel's extensive study of medieval antecedents to the ideological framework elaborated during the colonial period indicates that notions of Muslim deceit, violence, and lasciviousness reappear continually in European thought, and are manifested in aesthetic and political works as well as religious writings (ibid.:6).

The *Corso*

French attitudes towards North Africa reflected the traditional European view of Muslims in general, with a few added touches based on the special commercial and political relationship existing between the two areas since the sixteenth century. The economy of coastal North Africa was dominated by the *corso*, a form of privateering involving the plunder of merchant ships and raiding of coastal towns for slaves and booty. Although the *corso* was a general Mediterranean phenomenon (for example, the Christian Maltese knights also engaged in privateering and slave raiding), 'Barbary' privateering was seen in France as a pecularily Moorish vengeance for the triumph of Christianity in Spain, abetted by the general Muslim tendency towards fanaticism (Rejeb 1982:346). At the same time, French merchants profited from the sale of arms to Algerian corsairs, and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries relations between the two areas ricocheted from alliance to war and back again (Gallup 1973:59,60,61). Privateering and slave raiding provided a focus for French images of Muslims:

> Images of Barbary's slavery, piracy, cruelty, and vengefullness reinforced the connotations of barbarism and built up through the centuries a system of beliefs which became the dominant ideological expression of a would-be dominant European society, turning history into myth, creating a specific social disposition, inducing attitudes, and inculcating ways of behavior. Thus, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Europe increasingly viewed her relations with Algeria in terms of a pseudo-historical cycle, the "Barbary cycle", according to which "Barbary piracy led to the enslavement of Christians, which in turn

> called for some form of retaliation at once primitive, imperial, and morally imperative (Rejeb 1982:346).

Especially in France, attitudes towards Islam during these centuries were centered around the *corso* and the enslavement of Christians: powerful missionary orders whose sole function was the ransoming of Christian slaves were extremely influential in maintaining the "spirit of the Crusades" and in influencing large numbers of people through sermons, pamphlets, and the parading of former captives through the French countryside (Gallup 1973:67,70). Although the *corso* declined in the eighteenth century and, by the nineteenth, slavery virtually was non-existent, the need to smash these institutions once and for all was opined in Frence by government and religious leaders around the time of the Algerian expedition (ibid.:98).

The French view of the North African, conditioned by the Crusades and by the *corso*, emphasized "savagery, indolence, superstitution, ignorance, avarice, lust, deceit, jealousy, vengefulness, and tyranny" (Rejeb 1982:348). The notion of tyranny, inherited from the Middle Ages, had become more entrenched with the advent of the Ottoman Empire, and, although the Turkish janissary government in Algiers was for all practical purposes independent of the Sultan (Danziger 1977:16), Ottoman cruelty, anarchy, and violence were believed to typify Algerian society (Gallup 1973:106). The uncontrollable lasciviousness so deeply rooted in the characterization of the Infidel can be found as well in traveller's tales of encounters with the "wanton women" of Algiers (Rejeb 1982:347); when visiting the city Christian males fortunate enough to escape the advances of these women risked losing their virtue to the equally sinister homosexual elements supposedly rampant there (Gallup 1973:113).

These images of North Africa will be seen to bear directly upon the ideological justification for the French conquest of Algeria; as Rejeb points out, the views of North Africa reiterated and elaborated over three centuries ultimately coalesced into "a call for political action" (1982:353). Before the question of this action is addressed, however, attention must be directed to changes occurring in interpretations of the nature of the Muslim world in the eighteenth century.

The Eighteenth Century

In 1699, as a result of the Peace of Karlowitz, the Ottoman Turks withdrew from Hungary and adjacent areas; this signified a shift in the balance of power between Europe and the Orient attributable to the beginning of Ottoman decline. At the same time, a change in the climate of opinion in Europe occurred. This immediately must be qualified, however, because while interpretations of perceived Islamic traits received an infusion of new elements, the essential typification of the Muslim character remained the same.

The primary difference between eighteenth century notions of Islam and those existing earlier lay in the secularization of the image: on the one hand, this led to an attempt to analyze the Muslim state according to Enlightenment notions of progress, and on the other, to an interest in the more exotic aspects of Islamic life and treatment of these as a grand, amusing spectacle.

A belief in the tyrannical nature of the Oriental political system had been apparent in French thought from Crusader times on. In the eighteenth century, efforts were directed towards uncovering the causes for this presumed tyranny. Whereas formerly it had been attributed to the violent nature of the religion itself, emphasis now was placed on the corruption and anarchy thought to be caused by despotism and by "ecological" forces (Rodinson 1974:40). This 'scientific' approach, well-established by the end of the century, analyzed the Oriental polity according to:

> An emphasis on the absolute power of the ruler, and the whimsical, generally illegitimate nature of his demands; on the indifference or involuntary submission on the part of the ruled; on a somewhat irrational form of conflict in which sudden, irresponsible urges to riot are met with violent repression; and finally, an emphasis on the overall inefficiency and corruption of political life (Asad 1973:107)

Ottoman rule was seen as a static, fundamentally flawed entity, incapable of assimilating notions of progress, political freedom and, significantly, "free trade" (Daniel 1966:78). Although some French writers of this period, notably Voltaire, professed a certain admiration for aspects of Muslim civilization, such as its religious tolerance, belief in the essential falsity of Islam was sustained, now evaluated against doctrines of rationalism rather than those of Christianity (Rodinson 1974:38).

The idealistic spirit apparent in notions of the 'brotherhood of man' developed into a belief that is was possible and indeed morally imperative to elevate the less fortunate of the earth to the heights acheived by French civilization. Muslims were viewed as hapless victims of tyrannical despotism and superstition, and progressive elements in France magnanimously were prepared to offer instruction and expertise to these wayward children for the benefit of all mankind. The ethnocentrism of this idea of civilization is obvious, as is the fact that characterizations of Muslim society still were based on traditional assumptions about its nature. As Gallup points out:

> The erection of civilization into an absolute, a universally applicable standard of truth and morality, is a secularized version of Christianity versus Islam. Europe remains the sole depositary of truth, be it by providential design or under the aegis of progress (1973:273)

It is tempting to attribute the European conviction that the West had a duty to rescue the Muslim people from their slough of backwardness wholly to a cynical attempt to prepare and justify colonial expansion. Certainly, this was its effect (Asad 1973:117). At the same time, belief in the civilizing mission and in the veracity of the traditional assessment of the Orient was deeply entrenched in the European consciousness and led to a profound misrecognition of the nature both of the Orient and Europe's relation to it. This is evidenced by the conviction on the part of many French officials in 1830, including the commander-in-chief of the Algerian expedition, that they would be hailed as liberators by the indigenous by the indigenous North African population (Gallup 1973:218).

The evolution of the concept of the 'exotic' in regard to the Muslim world can be seen as a continuum extending over three centuries; the concept came into being in the eighteenth century, although trends in this directions appeared earlier (St. Clair 1973), and was fully elaborated in the nineteenth with the romantic cultivation of the bizarre. According to Daniel, who characterizes exoticism as a particular way of looking at the unusual whereby "pleasure is taken in things precisely because they are different", the tendency to see the Oriental world in an exotic light reflects the secularization of attitudes associated with the decline of Christian religious orthodoxy (1966:10). Galland's translation of *Les mille et une nuit*, published in 1704, has been cited as a decisive influence in the shift of French interpretations of the Muslim world's differences (Jullian 1977: ; Daniel 1966:9); they now became an object of entertainment:

> Thenceforth Islam was no longer seen as the anti-Christ but essentially that of an exotic, picturesque civilization, existing in a fabulous

> atmosphere peoples by good or evil, wayward genies - all this for the delight of an audience that had already shown so much taste for European fairy tales (Rodinson 1974:36).

In the middle of the century, Madame de Pompadour set fashion for the French court by dressing in Turkish clothes (St. Clair 1973:20) and a general fascination with the trappings of Oriental life can be found in the tendency for French literary erotica to situation its action in the Islamic world (Daniel 1966:22). Emphasis on the Muslim world as erotic wonderland was a prime feature of the 'exotification' of the Orient, and the supposed sexual "broad-mindedness" of Islamic society was cited approvingly by Enlightenment rationalists (Rodinson 1974:40). The belief that greater possibilities for erotic adventure existed among Muslims and that exoticism provided that touch of magic able to heighten sexual pleasure represents a new gloss on the traditional notion of Muslim lasciviousness. In the following century, the association of eroticism and the Orient intensified when the establishment of a colonial relationship permitted greater numbers of European males concretely to pursue their fantasies of Islamic sensuality.

This new characerization of the Orient as exotic was more than a relatively innocuous idealization of traits considered agreeably unusual: it had two effects. The first was to entrench a notion that the Muslim world existed to please and entertain Europeans; the second was to exaggerate the differences between the two areas:

> The relatively late tradition of treating Islamic things as exotic - a tradition which both fed the Imperial relationship and fed on it - made Muslims seem more different than they need be (Daniel 1966:48).

The Egyptian expedition

Although the invasion of Egypt and foray into Palestine undertaken by Napoleon in 1798 proved a political failure, it set the stage for subsequent colonial adventures and served to strengthen the taste for Orientalia that had been developing in France in the preceding decades. This action has been characterized as "a pivotal point in French colonial history" (Betts 1978:20). The propaganda surrounding the enterprise stressed French concern to bestow the light of civilization on Egypt by liberating Arabs from Ottoman anarchy and misrule; references also were made in France to Egypt as "a nation of notoriously superstitious fanatics" (Daniel 1966:91). Napoleon exploited this 'fanaticism' by claiming that he was "forseen" in the Koran and announcing to the Egyptians that "nous sommes les vrais musulmans"; he further insisted that France alone had the ability to purify Islam and resurrect past glories (ibid.:98,100). More recent images of the Muslim world also were reinforced by a selective perception of Egypt as an exotic, mysterious land, where as conquerors the French could find a "new Arabian Nights, both fabulous and sordid, sensual and farcical (Jullian 1977:24).

Napoleon hoped to conquer an entire country and establish a French colony there; significantly, a decree had been issued only eight years prior to the invasion codifying the principle that colonies were "an integral part of France" (Cobban 1963:42). Said speaks of the enterprise as being

> in many ways the very model of a truly scientific appropriation of one culture by another, apparently stronger one (1978:42)

and it seems that the invasion was intended to establish a physical appropriation as well. The invasion anticipated that of Algeria in the way in which notions of Muslim misrule and the civilizing imperative were used as justifications for the action. Perhaps more importantly, traditional images of the Muslim character, including assumptions about the fanatical nature of the religion, corruption, tyranny, and sensuality, overlain with a dash of exoticism, were accepted *a priori* by the French and served as a basis for action.

B. The Nineteenth Century: Conquest of Algeria

During the nineteenth century, French images of the Muslim world continued to draw on traditional sources but were used explicitly to explain and justify colonial expansion, and later as a lens through which to evaluate Muslim resistance and the failures of French native policy.

As noted, Crusader ideology was revived immediately prior to the conquest of Algiers, and in general the expedition was situated in a framework posing 'civilization' against 'barbarism': secular and commercial motives for the invasion were not addressed. The official cause of the action was an insult committed by the Dey of Algiers to the French consul - in a state of intense frustration, the Dey hit the latter several times with a fly-swatter (Betts 1987:21).

The actual motives for the invasion were much more complex, and, rather than being a well-planned, openly imperialistic venture as was the occupation of Tunisia in 1881, the Algerian expedition was a confused undertaking based on miscalculation and inconsistency (Danziger 1977:38). The conquest has been characterized as an attempt on the part of Charles X to restore prestige to his monarchy and win over liberal elements in the upcoming elections (Gallup 1973:194; Danziger 1977:38); certainly, his regime was in crisis, and only six weeks after troops landed in Algeria the barricades went up in Paris and the last Bourbon king was overthrown. Commercial motives intersected with political considerations: Marseilles merchants maintained extensive trade relations with Algeria since the sixteenth century and the Algerian "African Concessions" which they had held from that time generated large profits from wheat, fishing, coral, wool, and other raw materials (Gallup 1973:50). The possibility for permanent control of these commodities excited the Marseilles commercial community, as did the economic benefits to be derived from the armed forces' use of that city as a base for the expedition (Confer 1966:2). The commercial enrichment of southeastern France also meant support for the Bourbon regime.

Although the July Revolution soon eclipsed the interest generated by the expedition, the potential of the conquest was not lost on French patriots. A newspaper editorial written as news of the fall of Algiers broke enthused:

> Le prise d'Alger est commencement d'une ère nouvelle pour la civilisation du monde. Si nous savons en profiter, une partie de l'Afrique se couvrira en quelques années de populations laborieuses comme l'Amerique et la Méditerranée ne sera plus qu'un grand lac (1830, *Le constitutionnel*, in Ageron 1978:15)

Civilization and Genocide

It is important to discuss the process by which conquest and colonization of Algeria was carried out because of the profound contradiction between the ideals of the *mission civilisatrice* and the de facto genocide committed by the French invaders. The efficacy of ideologies existing both in regard to the nature of the Muslim character and that of the French mission was such that this contradiction was rendered invisible and therefore rarely was addressed in political and aesthetic works dealing with North Africa.

It took over fifteen years for the technologically superior French army to subdue armed resistance in Algeria led by Abd el-Kader; ultimately French success was due to actions directed against the civilian population rather than to strictly military victories. The Algerian war has been noted for its unusual degree of violence "rare in the history of modern colonization" (Bennoune 1976:208):

> The war for Algerian conquest was horrific in its violence. The army's principle was to kill and destroy every obstacle in its path. It raised this into the technique known as *razzia* involving the sacking and burning of village after village. There was not so much fighting as devastation and the reward for soldiers was not just promotion but booty.... Because the French could not defeat the Arabs militarily, they used famine and destruction (Zeldin 1977:924-25).

Although the scorched-earth policy primarily was carried out in the countryside, occupation of Algerian cities also was characterized by massacre and destruction, such as that ordered in Blida by General Clauzel, who wrote of the city being "jammed with corpses, among which were those of the elderly, women, children, and Jews. All had been defenceless" (in Bennoune 1976:208). Within one year the population of Algiers fell by 30,000, and that of Oran from 10,000 to 1,000 (ibid.:208,210). Buildings in Algiers were demolished in a search for hidden treasure (Gallup 1973:216).

Atrocities occurred regularly: the practice of asphyxiating civilians in caves where they had taken refuge became a matter of policy, and Bennoune notes that the news of 1,000 peasants smoked to death in Dahra cave elicited no comment from the government in Paris (1976:211). The similar suffocation by deliberate smoking of the Sbeah tribe caused

General Saint-Arnaud to remark:

> The ground will forever cover the bodies of these fanatics (in Gallup 1973:280).

The general wrote of his policy of killing all men over the age of fifteen, burning villages, destroying orchards, and the like. He added:

> In a paragraph of a letter you asked me what happens to the Algerian women we capture; some we keep as hostages and the rest are all auctioned off to the troops like animals (in Bennoune 1976:210).

An attitude which can almost be characterized as exhultation in the ability to destroy is apparent the the writing of officers such as Colonel Montaignac:

> Women and children, snared in the thick bushes that they were obliged to cross, surrendered to us. We kill, we slaughter, the screaming of the terror-stricken, the dying, blend with the noise of the beasts which roar, groan from all sides: it is hell, where instead of fire that roasts us, snow floods us (in ibid.:210).

French rule was characterized by exorbitant taxation, arbitrary execution of 'troublemakers', forced labour, and expropriation of native lands for French settlers (Danziger 1977:232). By 1851, 364,341 hectares of land had been seized from native Algerians (this rose to 3,028,000 hectares by 1954) (Bennoune 1976:211); by 1847, 109,000 Europeans had settled in the colony (Cobban 1963:110). Settlement increased after 1848 when thousands of French 'leftists' were sent to Algeria, and in 1851, when 9,000 prisoners were deported there (Hemmings 1971:25; Cobban 1963:157).

Although Napoleon III presented himself as a champion of native rights in his condemnation of land expropriation, Zeldin notes that official recognition of native property rights in 1863 served to open the country to capitalist exploitation. Whereas formerly the French government and army confiscated land, traditionally communal property now was considered to be privately owned by individual Arabs and could thus be purchased by private financiers: the result was to "turn the Arabs from landowners to labourers" (1977:296). The Algerians, decimated and increasingly impoverished, became a "rural proletariat working for the great European *latifundia*" (Cobban 1963:92), a condition looked forward to at the outset of the conquest: in the words of the *Commission d'Agrique*:

> To bring [the Algerian native]... peoples under the subjection of our social order, to force them to labour the soil, to make of them industrial machines, and at last taxable, would be a very fine thing (1833 in Bennoune 1976:221).

The Ideology of Conquest

France conquered Algeria in the name of civilization and Christianity; civilization would triumph over barbarism, a tyrannical Muslim government would be replaced by one devoted to humanitarian ideals, and the Cross proudly would rise again in the birthplace of St. Augustine. Public statements in 1830 referred to earlier times; the evocation of the Crusader king St. Louis has been mentioned, and references also were made to the necessity of destroying Barbary piracy and the enslavement of Christians (Daniel 1966:326). The revival of the attack on Islam tended to focus on the religion as the primary element preventing Algerians from accepting the 'benefits' of civilization.

The latter point is central, for it attributed any resistance on the part of Algerians to religious fanaticism. It provided a justification for stamping out Muslim religious orders, which were seen as "a network of dangerous organizations animated by a barbarous hatred of civilization" (Rodinson 1974:52). The notion of fanaticism, which formerly had been associated with the violence and deceit thought to be inherent in the religion, was extended in the early years of colonization and served to deflect attention from the political and ultimately secular nature of the relationship between the two areas (Danziger 1977). With every revolt interpreted as *jihad*, the concept of fanaticism could explain such phenomena by reference to an existing ideological construct.

An added twist to the French view of themselves as Christian soldiers was their identification with Roman conquerors of North Africa: the Romans were viewed as the legitimate possessors of the Maghreb (hence the reference to St. Augustine) who had been superceded by Arab invaders (Gallup 1973:180). This established an apparent historical continuum and highlighted the supposedly heroic nature of the enterprise, Romans being seen as "creators" of civilization and Muslims as "destroyers" (ibid.:184). The army promoted this view of French heroism, and associated the conquest with high adventure; Zeldin points out that those who fought in the Algerian war enjoyed considerable prestige and "formed a special kind of freemasonry" (1977:879).

As the Maghreb once had been the breadbasket of the Roman Empire, so it could be again once the French had eliminated Muslim 'misrule'. Algeria's beauty and potential for creating agricultural wealth was juxtaposed against the anarchy fostered by the tyrannical government; the indigenous population was considered "unworthy" of the country and Muslim mismanagement prevented the desert from blooming as it would under French administration (Gallup 1973:178).

While "the destruction of Muslim Algeria was presented...as a moral obligation in the service of humanity" (Gallup 1973:538) with medieval elements such as notions of Islamic tyranny, fanaticism, barbarism, and violence employed as aspects of the justification for the action, the enterprise also was characterized by an emphasis on the exotic. By 1830, the interest in the exotic apparent in the eighteenth century had deepened as a result of an infusion of romanticism. This sensibility is discussed below both generally and in regard to its influence on the Orientalist genre of painting, but, because the romantic view of the Orient structured French perceptions of Algeria, it is worthwhile to cite here Rodinson's description of romantic exoticism: the following characterization derives from elements present in Delacroix's celebrated *Massacre of Chios* (1824) and Hugo's *Les Orientales* (1825-28), both influential in shaping pre-conquest views:

> In [these works are]...present in all its essentials the Romantic's conception of the East, which flourished and persisted for so long in the public imagination: a riot of colour; sumptuousness and savage ferocity; harems and seraglios; heads chopped off and women thrown in sacks into the Bosphorous; feluccas and brigantines flying the Crescent banner; roundness of azure domes and soaring whiteness of minarets; viziers, odalisques, and eunuchs; cooling springs beneath the palms; *giaours* with their throats slit; captive women subjected to the victors ravenous lust.... Even when Westerners actually went to the East, this was the image they sought out, ruthessly selecting what they saw and ignoring what did not fit into their preconceived picture (1974:48).

The quest for the exotic in the Algerian conquest led to moments of absurdity, as when pleasure boats moored outside the harbour of Algiers to provide "elegant ladies" an opportunity to watch the bombardment of Algiers (Horne 1977:29). In Paris, the fascination with the sexual appetites of odalisques was apparent in the numerous plays, verses, and cartoons dealing with the ability of French troops to excite the lust of harem women (Gallup 1973:209). One example of this illustrates the remarkable discrepancy existing between fiction and reality:

> In a vaudeville "of Republican sentiment" the voluptuous wives of the Dey observe the army through a window, already choosing and discussing their future lovers whose arrival they await with impatience so they may be freed and taken to France

(ibid.:209).

Gallup discusses the disappointment on the part of French soldiers that Algeria was not as exotic as they had hoped followed by their excitement at the seizure of the Turkish *agha*'s headquarters with its "camels, musk, rugs"; with this, "all the dreams about a luscious Orient came to sudden life" (ibid.:215).

Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt to the period of full-blown imperialism initiated in the Third Republic, the primary ideological justification for French expansion remained the *mission civilisatrice* (Betts 1978:49). In the latter part of the century racial arguments were added to this in an attempt to naturalize the colonial relationship through the sophistication of science (Ageron 1978:33). The heroic nature of the colonial enterprise was restated again and again, and particularly after the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the hyperbole surrounding France's heroic mission found favour. Leroy-Beaulieu's study, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes*, was first published in 1876, rapidly went through six editions, and provided a highly influential economic argument for imperialism that would give impetus to the adventures of the 1880's (Betts 1978:45). It is significant that while the subject of this study was economic theory, Leroy-Beaulieu closes with a grand eulogy to the spirit of colonialism:

> La colonisation est la force expansive d'un peuple,

> c'est sa puissance de reproduction, c'est la dilation et sa multiplication à travers les espaces. C'est la soumission de l'univers ou d'une vaste partie à sa langue, à ses moeurs, à ses idees et à ses lois. Un peuple qui colonise c'est un peuple qui jette les assises de sa grandeur dans l'avenir et de sa suprématie future....Le peuple qui colonise le plus est premier peuple: s'il ne l'est pas aujourd'hui, il le sera demain (1876 in Ageron 1978:34).

The notion of civilization, with its ideas of progress articulated by Thiers as the movement "from the desert to the city, from cruelty to gentleness, from ignorance to knowledge" (in Zeldin 1977:9), by definition existed in opposition to what was perceived as 'barbarism'. Muslims, who had represented barbarism from Crusader times, did not lose this characterization in the colonial period: rather, it was entrenched by their resistance to the 'benefits' offered by French civilization. The exoticism discerned in Islamic life referred to a splendid, dying past, and after colonization was contingent on the Orient's continued underdevelopment (Rodinson 1974:43). The nineteenth-century image of the Muslim is typified by the retention and elaboration of traits delineated during the Crusader period - updated versions of traditional notions of violence, deceit, tyranny, fanaticism, and lasciviousness - whose apparent veracity was reinforced by the colonial experience of Muslim 'ingratitude'. Thus arose the concept of what Rodinson calls "*Homo islamicus*...a creature apart, imprisoned in his specificity, an object of condescending praise" (ibid.:48), and evincing a "congenital *incivilisabilité*" (Gallup 1973:278). This modern variant of the centuries-old Christianity/Islam dichotomy insisted that what must be emphasized in political, scientific and aesthetic works about the Orient was its essential difference from the European world. As Daniel comments:

> This imperial attitude meant thinking of a people as different and inferior: agreeable or disagreeable, but always different (1966:154).

A final note should be made of the somewhat ironic notion of "rebarbarization" emerging in the late nineteenth century from European *colons* in Algeria. Traits traditionally attributed to Muslims, such as cruelty, violence, and sensuality, were now seen as characterizing *colons* and inspiring in them "the will to dominate":

> But, through a revaloursization, these traits which were those of the *indigène incivilisable*, condemning him to unchangeable inferiority, now became positive features when applied to Europeans, a source of virility and energy, promise for the future of a new race. Through one more trick of the age-old dualism the *indigène incivilisable* is transformed into a Nietzschean hero (Gallup 1973:318).

The historical and ideological context in which Orientalist painting was produced has been outlined; many elements characterizing traditional French attitudes towards the Muslim world are expressed aesthetically, with contradictions and tensions apparent in the ideological naturalization of conquest and colonization also reproduced.

IV. The Institutional and Aesthetic Context of Orientalism

A. The Institutional Context

The production and distribution of painting in nineteenth-century France was characterized by State intervention of an unprecedented nature. Various governments maintained powerful fine arts *bureaux* and exercized extensive influence on the Academic and pedagogical institutions and the annual Salons. The system of State patronage distributed artwork throughout France and official commissions and purchases were a primary source of support to artists and made many rich. Throughout the century, successive regimes sought to create a 'national' art, imbued with the spirit of patriotism and glorifying the heroic episodes in French history and contemporary experience.

The centralization of the government bureaucracy initiated in the seventeenth century by Louis XIV led to the formation of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* in 1655 and the subsequent breakdown of the largely Church-controlled guild system (Boime 1971:1). State control over the arts increased after the 1789 revolution and the direct government involvement in aesthetics evident throughout the nineteenth century was firmly established by the Napoleonic regime. This in part resulted from a greater recognition during the First Empire of the propagandistic possibilities of art as exemplified in the work of David and Gros, and Cobban notes the great influence of such propagandistic paintings in the glorification of the Emperor and in the creation of a heroic view of war (1966:36). The use of painting for ideological purposes connected with a militant nationalism during the Napoleonic period was accompanied by government censorship of aesthetic works; this also continued throughout the century as evidenced by the numerous prosecutions and censoring of 'seditious' works by State agencies (Clapp 1972).

The Institutions and the State

The *Académie*, *École*, and *Bureau des Beaux-Arts* were, along with the Salon, the primary institutions through which intervention was exercized in the artistic arena. The *Académie* was a nominally independent, essentially honourary body that from 1816 onward legally was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior. Although the *Académie* maintained a certain degree of autonomy from the the State in aesthetic matters and was typically more resistant to innovative styles than government bureaux, all administrative decisions required confirmation from the Ministry (Boime 1971:7). The State sponsored art instruction through the prestigious *École des Beaux-Arts*, graduation from which was a de facto prerequisite for a successful artistic career (Lethève 1968:28). The *Académie* and the *École* were closely linked: the *Académie* recruited teachers for the *École* and supervised *École* competitions such as the Prix-de-Rome exhibition. While the *École* instructed students in artistic techniques, the *Académie* for all practical purposes regulated curriculum through its influence and control of selection of *École* staff (Boime 1971:8).

The *Bureau des Beaux-Arts* was the government agency through which paintings were commissioned and political patronage exercized in matters relating to the arts. More liberal in stylistic matters than the *Académie*, the *Bureau* attempted to mediate between conflicting aesthetics by purchasing works representing a variety of styles, provided innovation was executed with moderation (ibid.:18). The *Bureau* provided stipends and, sometimes, charity to painters as well as awarding commissions, but Clark notes that these were not always based on artistic merit:

> Those who asked for [the *Bureau's*] services stressed their good family, their support of the regime, their influential backers. If they wished to clinch their case they dropped political hints... (1973:52)

Procedures for State commissions were formalized during the July Monarchy, with artists being subject to a grading system, and the policy of commissioning copies from relatively unknown artists established. The aim of the latter policy in part was "...to encourage loyalty to the institutional system" (Boime 1971:11). Large-scale State commissions were the most lucrative and prestigious jobs to which artists could aspire. Lethève points out that in these monumental pieces the smallest extremes of detail often were specified, down to the precise postition of feet and hands (1968:133), and when Louis-Phillipe commissioned several battle paintings for Versailles he had meticulous historical reports prepared for the artists (Boime 1980:30). Following the Napoleonic example, successive governments sent painters on artistic missions outside France to depict events of national importance; a number were appointed to record the Algerian war, the most famous of whom was Vernet (Jullian 1977:125). The Catholic Church and government occasionally collaborated in renovation projects requiring large-scale decoration of churches and cathedrals; this increased during the Second Empire, and as was the case with State commissions, those sponsored by the Church specified in detail what was to be painted (Boime 1980:232).

The State system of patronage was operated by the *Bureau*, and involved the presentation of commissioned works or those already in the *Bureau's* possession to politicians, provincial towns, and local 'notables'. This form of distribution generally was tied into the government's reward system for political favours but also could serve as a propaganda weapon: Clark notes that especially after the upheavals of 1848, stereotyped religious paintings were ordered by local gentry for recalcitrant republicans as one way of dissipating revolutionary sentiments (1973:54).

While the majority of art criticism was not formally controlled by the State, official pressures nevertheless exercized considerable influence in this area, through censorship on the one hand (Hemmings 1971:181) and the policy, common by the Second Empire, of offering government appointments to successful art critics (Sloane 1951:25). Théophile Gautier, one of the most influential art journalists of the century, who more than anyone helped to foster the taste for romantic subjects and Orientalism, received numerous official honours and appointments, and wrote for the official Second Empire art journal; he has been characterized as "virtually the government's own art and theatre critic" (Snell 1982:37).

The nature of official control over the various institutions of artistic production tended to discourage artists both from involvement in political activities critical of the existing regime and from producing works that could be interpreted by the latter as censorious of official policy. As a result, most painters, recognizing that their "first source of support was the State" (Lethève 1968:130) bowed to prevailing political winds. This has been noted by Hemmings:

> [The artists']...relative indifference to political issues is explainable by the ethos that governed their conditions of work. The whole system of State training, government bursaries, official exhibitions and the commissioning of large-scale decorative works by the administration meant that immense pressures were at work all through a painter's career to compel him to toe whatever line, politically speaking, was supposed to be toed at the time (1971:88)

The Salon or Exhibition of Living Artists

The annual focus of the institutional art world and the public was the State-sponsored Salon. Until the last part of the century, the Salon was the primary channel through which both aspiring unknowns and established artists could achieve recognition and reach potential customers some collectors only would buy pieces that had been exhibited at the Salon, and the system of 'medalling' led to increased revenue for artists so awarded (Lethève 1968:121). In theory, any artist could exhibit at this event but in reality a rigourous selection procedure was followed: a jury consisting of government officials and *Académie* members, and, after 1849, State appointees and established artists, chose the paintings to be shown at the Salons (White and White 1965:30). Especially from the July Monarchy period on, bitter complaints were voiced by artists about the arbitrary nature of the rulings, and in 1881 pressure from the artistic community finally forced a reorganization of the jury system (Boime 1971:17). The jury was known not only for its conservatism in aesthetic matters, but also for its attempts to "regulate the moral and political positions" of the paintings (Lethève 1968:109). Membership of the jury fluctuated from eight to fifteen (White and White 1965:30).

The number of artists exhibiting at this event increased during the century from 258 in 1801 to 1,280 in 1831 to 3,190 in 1880 (Lethève 1968:11). The importance of the Salon as a popular national event cannot be underestimated: it aroused the interest of all classes and people poured in from the provinces as well as from Paris to view the latest works, argue their merits, and, sometimes, to purchase (Zeldin 1977:445). The excitement generated by the Salon has been compared to that of present-day "international sporting events" (Hemmings 1971:92). According to Daumier, the 1857 Salon had as many as 60,000 visitors on certain days, and paid attendance often numbered 10,000 daily (Lethève 1968:120; White and White 1965:30).

Working-class people and "shopkeepers" attending the Salon tended to purchase inexpensive lithographic reproductions of Salon favourites (Hemmings 1971:89; Lethève 1968:159); the more popular paintings also were widely reproduced in journals and daily newspapers (White and White 1965:79). Zeldin cites the influential role of newspapers in moulding artistic taste (1977:444) and the influential role of Gautier in in this regard has been noted above. Through such reproductions Salon works were disseminated throughout France, where in rural areas the print peddlar was "an important source of entertainment" (ibid.:452). Thevoz discusses the impact of the Salon on French society:

> It is arguable that never before in history has painting played such an important role. It is only necessary to read those pages in Zola's *l'Oeuvre* concerned with the opening of the Salon to see that the exhibition was of national importance. The work of art, from the time it received the consecration of the Salon, reached by means of engravings a far wider public than the French art world. This popular imagery, which found its models in the print shops of the rue St-Jacques, and through them, in the large academic compositions of the Salon, was

> diffused by peddlars into the most isolated parts of the country in a period when the largely illiterate population began to transform into a politicised proletariat (1982:24).

The Aesthetic: general overview

A general description of the kind of art endorsed by the State and buying public is in order. Most writers attest to a broad correspondence in taste among the government bureax, the *Académie*, and the bourgeoisie purchasing works for their homes (Moulin 1978:13; Boime 1971:14). The much-vaunted classic/romantic split and later furor over Realism seems to have been overemphasized by later critics; while the more 'extreme' manifestations of the above styles were initially rejected by official institutions and the public, much successful nineteenth century painting eclectically incorporated elements drawn from various styles. The concept of a stylistic *juste milieu* was established during the Restoration and maintained for most of the century (Boime 1980:25); and even supposedly romantic critics such as Gautier could extol both Ingres and Delacroix throughout their respective careers (Snell 1982).

In regard to subject matter, the highest accolades were reserved for 'history painting' of a patriotic nature. As White and White point out, "art was accepted as being an essential exposition of the symbols of power" (1965:16), and to this end various rulers sought to direct art towards subjects that would glorify both the nation and the regime. The monumental history and battle paintings commissioned by

Louis-Phillipe for the Versailles historical museum are examples of his wish to create a great French art based on historical subjects. In this:

> Louis-Phillipe was successful in guiding art in an 'exclusively historical and national' direction and encouraging a class of artists to associate their eclectic aspirations with a chauvinist art (Boime 1980:31).

Successive administrations continued this emphasis; during the Second Empire the Director of Fine Arts explicitly stated that art "had the advantage over history in reporting the fact, and that [the artist] should exercize this privilege on behalf of the State" (1980:278). The government viewed art as a source of national pride and was concerned that France excel in this area as in others. Napoleon III, for example:

> ...was seeking definitively to affirm Paris' place as the capital of Europe, to establish artistic as well as economic and dashingly military dominance... (Snell 1982:149).

'History painting' included military, classical, religious, and historical subjects and was the most prestigious of the Salon's categories (Sloane 1951:30). Thevoz argues that a formal relationship exists between history painting and the propagandistic works executed by David for Napoleon I; as did painters of a later period, David:

> refers to antiquity, not as an historically determined period, but as a standard for conduct (1982:24).

This heroic standard of behavior ideally was to be found in civilizations of the past, especially Roman, Greek and biblical antiquity, and the inherent nobility of the subject matter was believed to provide moral guidance (Zeldin 1977:471). As well, the grandeur of the Classical world provided a mirror in which the greatness of the French State could be discerned as the legitimate heir of a rich historical legacy (Duro 1982:23).

The high moral principles traditionally expressed in history painting sometimes degenerated into a perverse fascination with the decadence also associated with ancient civilizations. Placing scenes of decadence and erotic abandon in a Classical context provided a justification for the introduction of such elements into 'high' art (Boime 1980:162). Couture's highly celebrated monumental work, *Romans of the decadence* (1847), is an example of this; on the one hand, the viewer could be titillated by the orgy scene and on the other read into it a moral lesson (ibid.:136). The presentation of the theme of decadence in art employed both violence and terror as well as erotic elements, and this emphasis and related academic interest in "frigid and blood-soaked history and mythology" (Serres 1982:54) had profound implications for the development of Orientalism. It seemed that some painters preferred to elicit delicious horror rather than noble sentiments and many such works achieved extraordinary popularity with the State and the public (White and White 1965:91).

By mid-century scenes of brutality and sex had come into prominence as a subject of history painting; at the same time, greater emphasis was placed on the battle piece as a means of illustrating heroic events of contemporary history (Sloane 1951:37). As well, artists of this period evinced a new interest in daily life of the past and anecdotal elements crept into depictions of antiquity (Boime 1982:65). The traditional category of history painting thus divided into three emphases: the violent and erotic past, the monumental treatment of the battle as glorification of the present, and the portrayal of everyday scenes in antiquity as a means of naturalizing the present through reference to the past.

Other categories of painting in the Salon hierarchy were, in descending order of importance, "genre and portraiture, landscape, and still life" (Sloane 1951:30). In reality, these categories were rather fluid, as noted above in the trend towards placing genre scenes in historical settings. Sloane notes that by mid-century Salon reviews complained of the difficulty in classifying paintings according to traditional criteria (ibid.:119).

The buying public, that is, the French bourgeoisie, helped to foster the taste for landscape and genre scenes in their demand for smaller works that could decorate their houses (Snell 1982:159). The heroic or monumental subjects of the history paintings purchased by the State were considered too strong for bourgeois drawing rooms: the latter preferred sentimentalized, anecdotal scenes expressing "a glossy, restrained, and idealized version of reality" (Moulin 1978:13). A popular Salon work of this type might be replicated many times by the artist, as was the case for Landelle, who painted twenty versions of *Fellah Woman* (Lethève 1968:141).

Despite a difference in buying patterns between the government and private collectors, in general taste overlapped and certain subjects, such as those found in many Orientalist works, could satisfy both the State's demand for themes extolling national pride and the bourgeoisie's regard for sentimentality (Jullian 1977:74). Boime makes this point in his analysis of the popular image of the drummer boy in painting of this perod: deliberately propagandistic, the drummer boy embodied militarism, patriotism, and self-sacfifice in a sentimentalized, often sickly atmosphere (1980:339). The official emphasis on momumental works did not preclude State purchase of landscape and genre scenes; as well, private buyers often bought historical works emphasizing national heroism or expressing violent or sensual themes (Jullian 1977:77).

B. The Intellectual and Aesthetic Sensibility

Because Orientalist paintings did not produce and reinforce colonialist and other State ideologies in a simple, reflective manner, attention must be directed to the general intellectual and aesthetic sensibility characterizing French intellectual life in the nineteenth century. Ideological themes present in Orientalism were mediated and in some cases transformed by this sensibility, which had a profound effect on specific artistic forms expressed in the genre as well as in the general aesthetic treatment of the Orient. This sensibility had an internal dynamic which was relatively automonous from the ideological requirments of the State, but which, in the case of Orientalism, acted upon State ideologies, added and subtracted elements thereof, and subjected them to the dominant artistic codes.

Romanticism

Although many elements of the sensibility described below generally are associated with 'romanticism', the term must be qualified. The *juste milieu* approach to painting noted above derived in part from the ideas of Victor Cousin, who was extremely influential in shaping the intellectual sensibility of the century; the majority of writers and artists assimilated his views on eclecticism, including such 'romantics' as Hugo, Vigny, Lamartine, and Delacroix (Boime 1980:16,30). While we may characterize certain aspects of the ethos under discussion as romantic, it should be borne in mind that the term refers here not to a single formula but rather to a body of ideas drawing elements from a broad range of sources and evolving over the course of the century.

The term 'romanticism' has been defined variously, in part because it was an ontological framework as much as a style of painting or literature, and also because of its tendency to encompass so many disparate and apparently contradictory elements. Bullock and Stallybrass address this complexity:

> [Romanticism]...was a specific revolt against formality and containment in art, ideas and notions of man, an assertion of the primacy of the perceiver in the world he perceives; hence theories of the imagination are central to it. In central Romantic thought, the organic relation of man and nature, of the interior and transcendent imagination is proposed; but much Romanticism is about loss of contact and 'dejection', and can lead to the hallucinatory or fantastic as a mode of perceptual redemption. It contains deep nationalistic and populist assumptions, ranges from strongly individualistic to revolutionary-collective concerns, and extends from idealism and neo-platonism to an agonized nihilism (1977:459).

Antecedents of the romantic sensibility can be found in the eighteenth century in the works of two writers expressing opposite sides of the same philosophical coin: Sade and Rousseau (Boime 1980:181). Both were concerned with laws of nature, the liberating effects of 'barbarism', and the decadence of French society, but whereas Rousseauists nostalgically looked back to a golden age of primeval purity, aficianados of Sade sought transformation through the horror inherent in nature and exhulted in the decadence accompanying civilization. Sade believed:

> "Everything is evil, everything is the work of Satan". It is therefore necessary to practice vice because it conforms to the laws of nature (Rousseau's 'les plus pures lois de la nature'!)

> which insists upon destruction. Evil is the axis of the universe (Praz 1933:121).

Decadence and the Imagination

An interest in decadence was evident throughout the century and expressed in a fascination with the decline of such civilizations as Imperial Rome and Byzantium as well as the Ottoman Empire. This search for decadent, corrupt elements in foreign countries was associated with a desire for variety and strangeness accompanied by a titillating dash of horror. A particularly splendid kind of decay seemed to be incarnate in the mythic Orient beloved of a large number of romantic intellectuals, including Chateaubriand, Hugo, Lamartine, Flaubert, Nerval, Gautier, Vigny, Musset, and others. To a certain extent the interest in a glittering, barbaric Orient is related to the medievalist revival initiated during the Restoration, which romanticized the Crusades and the French historical experience in the Middle East; it should be noted that medievalism was encouraged by the Bourbon regime and went hand in hand with "the political conservatism of young romantic writers and painters" (Boime 1980:97). The glory and adventure of Crusader times was evoked by medieval epic poetry, such as the *Chanson de Roland* and *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, considered an integral part of the French cultural heritage and repopularized during this period. Chateaubriand, who "eroticized the Middle Ages" (ibid.:250), glorified the Crusader period and in his visit to the Orient in 1805-06 wrote of Islamic tyranny, despotism, and savagery and of the necessity for France to teach the Muslim the meaning of freedom (Said 1978:178). While writers might evoke the magnificent decadence of the Islamic past as a stimulant to the imagination, many saw the present in a colonialist light.

Emphasis on liberation of the imagination nevertheless was a key element in the romantic sensibility and it is not surprising that this emphasis carried over to the aesthetic treatment of the Orient; the two occasionally were associated, as in the remark by a member of Gautier's circle who wrote in the mid 1830's:

> The inner life, the romantic and metaphysical life is as unruly, as adventurous and as free as Arab tribes in their wilderness(in Snell 1982:24).

Lamartine viewed his visit to the East as a "grand acte de ma vie intérieure" and Nerval spoke of the "rêves et de l'illusion" he discovered on his trip there in 1842-43 (in Said 1978:177,182).

Hugo's verses, *Les Orientales* (1824-28), were extremely influential in fostering a romantic vision of the East; beautifully written, these works conjure up a magical yet barbarously magnificent picture of Oriental splendour, decadence, cruelty, and sensuality. Rich associations abound, for example:

> Il faut au Sultan des Sultanes
> Il faut des perles au poignard
> (XII) *La Sultana favorite*

One aspect of Hugo's imaginative Orient that had implications for the aesthetic sensibility developing in regard to the East was his tendency to juxtapose different ages, countries, and ethnic groups to create a grand panorama called 'the Orient'. Thus the historical and geographical specificity of the Middle East on the one hand fragmented into a series of colourful impressions, and on the other coalesced into a timeless, generalized entity expressing typically 'Oriental' traits. Not only was the East made exotic through aesthetic expositions of its splendour, decadence, and so forth, but artistic works also could employ these elements in paeans to conquest. Hugo also wrote of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt:

> Au Nil je le retrouve encore
> L'Egypte resplendit des feux de son aurore;
> Son astre impérial se lève à l'orient.
> Vainqueur, enthousiaste, éclantant des prestiges,
> Prodige, il étonna la terre des prodiges.
> Les vieux scheiks vénéraient l'émir jeune et prudent;
> le peuple redoutait ses armes inouïes;
> Sublime, il apparut aux tribus éblouies
> Comme un Mahomet d'Occident. (in Said 1978:82)

The vogue for exotic decadence was passionately promoted by Gautier throughout his forty-year career both in his reviews of Salon paintings and in novels such as *Une nuit de Cléopâtra* (1849) and *Roman de la Momie* (1857). He was a member of the circle of prominent writers and artists who, during the July Monarchy, exhibited a Sadean affinity for decaying civilizations, especially in their more orgiastic aspects (Boime 1980:181). Gautier assiduously cultivated the image of the decadent Oriental and in his writings expressed a fascinated delight in the violence and melancholy assumed to permeate the soul of the Oriental potentate; his association of the East with horror, melancholy, and sex will be seen below in his reviews of Orientalist paintings.

While Gautier has been characterized as "the genuine founder of exotic aestheticism" (Praz 1933:229) with its romantic elements of decadence and horror, he also trivialized this sensibility by looking at the Orient as high fashion. The following excerpt is typical of this side of the journalist:

> It is strange, we believe we have conquered Algeria, but Algeria has conquered us. Our women already wear scarves interwoven with thread of gold, streaked with a thousand colours, which have served the harem slaves, our young men are adopting the camel hair burnous...hashish is taking the place of champagne; our Spahi officers look so Arab one would think they had captured themselves in a *smala*; they have adopted all the Oriental habits, so superior is primitive life to our so-called civilization. If this goes on, France will soon be Mahometan and we shall see the white domes of mosques rounding themselves on our horizons...we should indeed like to live to see the day (Gautier 1845 in Richardson 1959:76).

Shortly after this article was written, Gautier was sent to Algeria by Louis-Phillipe to record his impressions of the colony and of General Bugeaud's pacification of Kabylia.

While the romantic preoccupation with decadence to a large extent was expressed in relation to ancient Rome, the ability of the aesthetic Orient to combine the pervasive theme of decay with exoticism and a different kind of sensuality assured the romantic's continued interest in the area. Stories and paintings of Cleopatra achieved wide popularity, in part because this subject comprised both Oriental elements and those of Imperial Rome. A 1837 review discussed a rendition of *Cleopatra* as existing

> ...at that solemn moment when Roman grandeur is fading and becoming more uneasy under the impact of Oriental delights...[when] slaves...bring an end to the intoxicating delights of decadence (*L'Artiste* 1837, in Boime 1980:159)

The fascination with the glittering corruption of dying civilizations apparent in the earlier part of the century in the works of Hugo, Delacroix and Byron had by the second evolved into a widespread conviction that France itself was in an age of Imperial decline (Hemmings 1971:209). Some writers, such as Mallarmé and Baudelaire, welcomed this degeneration (1971:213); Baudelaire supported the 1848 revolution precisely because it unleashed "evil" and Sadean horror (Clarke 1973:174). A kind of inversion of Rousseau was apparent in the extension of the pursuit of decadence into a celebration of the artificial as manifested in the work of Moreau and Huysmans. Huysmans' *A Rebours*, "the bedside book of a whole generation" (Hemmings 1971:209), presented the French intellectual world with a wealthy protagonist who sought to create his experience through the construction of an artificial universe over which he had total control. His ability to express a "combination of the effete and the imperious" is typical of late decadence of this sort (Garber 1982:283).

Eroticism

Another theme must be be added to the romantic idealization of decadence, barbarism, and exoticism: this is its peculiar concept of eroticism, which was shot through with elements of persecution, tyranny and death. The frequent association of violence and eroticism in Orientalist paintings also is apparent in literary works of the century, as in the case of Gautier's *Roman de la momie* (1857) which expresses a "macabre, fetishistic eroticism" (Snell 1982:7) and was serialized in the Second Empire's official journal, *Le Moniteur*. Praz characterizes this sensibility as a primary quality of romantic intellectual thought and discusses the relation of beauty to death in aesthetics:

> ...to such an extent were beauty and death looked upon as sisters by the Romantics that they became fused into a sort of two-faced herm, filled with corruption and melancholy and fatal in its beauty -- a beauty of which, the more bitter the taste, the more abundant the enjoyment (1933:48).

The sense of melancholy which permeates the association of sensuality and death has been characterized as the "quintessential expression" (Boime 1980:84) of romantic thought; it is present in Hugo's work and in Gautier's enthusiasms for the melancholy beauty of Algerian women belonging to a dying race (Sandoz 1874:58).

In the earlier part of the century, emphasis was placed on the persecuted woman subjected to the whims of a tyrannical male, who nevertheless was melancholy in his absolutism; at the same time, the theme of the captive woman was common throughout the century (Bade 1979:3). The themes of tyranny, melancholy, and the captive woman came together in the fascination with white slavery and the harem not always confined to the realm of the imagination: Nerval bought a slave girl in Cairo and wrote about the experience (Daniel 1966:40). The tormented women of Delacroix, Hugo and early Balzac in the second half of the century gave way to its opposite; women now were portrayed as destructive, but fascinating in their evil. This is apparent in the works of Flaubert, who admired Sade (Praz 1933:170); *Salammbô* (1862), set in ancient North Africa, evoked scenes of barbaric cruelty and Oriental mystery dominated by a goddess-like creature. Praz writes of Flaubert's vision:

> For Flaubert, the ideal [land] is a barbaric and savage Orient, with gold, marble, and purple, certainly, but also with blood and corruption and horrible decays and miasmas (ibid.:176).

During Flaubert's visit to the Orient in 1849-50, he sought spectacle, examples of the "bizarre jouissance" referred to in the *Description de l'Egypte* of the Napoleonic era (Said 1978:103); Said also notes Flaubert's obsession with Oriental sexuality and his use of an Egyptian courtesan encountered in Wadi Halfa as the model for Salammbô and Salomé.

Associated with the notion of sex as subjugation was the tendency in romantic art and literature to treat the orgy as a kind of transcendental experience, reminiscent both of decadence and a golden age. Fourier considered orgiastic behavior as a means of "motivating industrial armies to produce prodigious material feats" and claimed it was "typical of primitive societies" (Boime 1980:169,173). Balzac, Gautier, and Hugo wrote of such scenes; Gautier's *Une nuit de Cléopâtre* (1849) centres around an orgy. The orgy theme also expresses an interest in decadence harkening back to Sade, and Praz points out that the scene depicted in Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (1928) (Plate 4.) bears affinities to orgies described in the works of the "divine marquis" (1933:198). As noted above, Couture's enormously popular *Romans of the decadence* (1847) placed the orgy in a Roman setting which "gave it the exotic content and justification for discession and/or practice" (Boime 1980:162). This also applied to Orientalism, where explicitly sensual works or those containing allusions to lesbianism, such as *The Turkish bath*, could only be exhibited in public because of their reference to a "foreign culture" (Smith 1974:48).

In conclusion, this discussion of the romantic sensibility and its effect on the aesthetic treatment of the Orient has emphasized the complexly interwoven notions of decadence, horror, eroticism and melancholy. It must be emphasized that these themes characterized the sensibility

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as a whole and were not confined to imaginative depictions of the Muslim world; an interest in the medieval period and in ancient Rome has been mentioned and other locales have elicited attention as well. While these sometimes combined to produce a gothic Orient or a fascination with Ptolemaic Eqypt, romanticism had its own momentum which transcended interest in specific times and places. It should be noted that literary romanticism was widely popular and "plebian imitations" of the more rarefied works described above appealed to a mass audience (Allen 1971:9).

V. The Orientalist Genre of Painting

Orientalist painting was extraordinarily popular in France throughout the nineteenth century, but particularly during and after the conquest of Algeria (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:36). The East captured the attention of painters working in the entire range of stylistic approaches, from neo-classicist to impressionist, and the subject matter of these works encompassed battle pieces, nudes, landscape, and portraiture as well as scenes drawn from fantasy. While aesthetic treatment generally was infused with elements of exoticism, the heroic and picturesque also were apparent. Orientalism became so popular after 1830 that it often merited a special section in Salon catalogues (Sloane 1951:115) and a vast number of painters during the century experimented with this genre, including artists not commonly identified with Orientalism. Because of the great numbers of French Orientalists, it has been suggested that the term 'genre' inadequately addresses the scope of this movement, 'school' being a more appropriate appellation (Fine Art Society 1978:8). Travel in the East was not a prerequisite for creating Oriental scenes:

> Orientalism gained such a hold on the contemporary artistic imagination that a number of artists who had never visited the East created their own evocations of these romantic lands from their imaginations, to satisfy an apparently insatiable demand for the genre (Harding 1979:72)

Orientalism was very much a French genre, although a number of British artists also painted Eastern scenes as to a lesser extent did artists from elsewhere in Europe. Jullian speaks of the French Orientalist as "...an official figure, a sort of Ambassador of the Exotic accredited to the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*" (1977:47). This genre became a favourite of the buying bourgeoisie, and the State also was enthusiastic about Orientalism and commissioned and purchased numerous paintings of this type to be exhibited in "palaces, museums, and public buildings" (Mickalak in press:4).

Although thematic elements characterizing Orientalism are present throughout the century, for the purposes of analysis the genre may be divided into three historical periods: 1800-30, 1830-70, and 1870-1900. These periods correspond to different phases of French colonial expansion but also express different stages in the artistic evolution of the genre. The following section offers a *précis* of each period and its major artists, after which the relation of the Orientalist painter to greater French society is considered.

A. History of the Genre

1800-1830

Prior to the nineteenth century, Oriental subject matter primarily was found in illustrated travel books, the occasional *turquerie*, and in paintings of European women dressed in Oriental clothing (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:13). In the rare paintings depicting a Muslim figure, emphasis was placed on details of costume and the richness of the fabrics, as in the work of Liotard and Barbault's *Imam de la grande mosquée* (1748).

Orientalist painting up to 1830 provides a starting point for the genre, with more developed themes apparent in subsequent periods present here for the first time. These paintings tend to be inspired by the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, the Greek War for Independence, as well as by literary works of the period. Many paintings of the Egyptian invasion were explicitly propagandistic, both in regard to presentation of the action and in that they appear to have been commissioned to counter reports of French atrocities during the campaign (Brown University 1982).

The first 'true' Orientalist works were executed in the first decade of the nineteenth century by Gros, who was commissioned by Napoleon to paint scenes illustrating the Egyptian campaign. *Bonaparte visits the plague victims at Jaffa* (1804), which could be described as a religious painting in its glorification of the French general, was highly celebrated and won several prizes at the Salon of 1804 (Boime 1980:38). In this work, the tricolor flies proudly above the Muslim city, contrasting with the picturesque architecture of the scene. *Battle of Aboukir* (1806) (Plate 2) commemorated Murat's victory in Egypt and its treatment of the scene's violent action prefigured later Orientalist battle pieces (Jullian 1977:26). Gros painted other Egyptian works, including *Profile of a young Egyptian girl* (1810), which depicts the girl with an "amorous expression" on her face (Francis 1955:36) and, in general, the artist's work, although neo-classical in style, contains many pre-romantic elements in its approach to the Orient (1955:7).

A series of Egyptian revolts against the French presence during Napoleon's occupation of the country inspired Girodet's *Revolt in Cairo* (1810) (Plate 1). This artist, another favourite of Napoleon, shares similarities with Gros in his treatment of violence; allusions to homosexuality express an interest in Oriental sensuality, and its association with violence will be strengthened in later works. Both Gros and Girodet emphasize the rich fabrics worn by the Egyptians, and attention is paid to details of the fierce-looking Oriental weaponry.

Ingres, one of France's foremost artists, began to paint odalisques during this period, although his Orientalism becomes more explicit later in his career. Eastern settings were used as background in his experiments with treatment of the nude as an aesthetically perfect object. *The bather* (n.d.) evinces some Oriental trappings and in the *Grande Odalisque* (1814) (Plate 3) this becomes more obvious in his choice of jewels, pipe, and incense; although the latter painting was criticized as "cold" (Snell

1982:107) when first exhibited, the voyeurism and sense of calculated allure provides a model for later harem scenes.

Delacroix's stature as an artist was such that his use of Orientalist subject matter proved highly influential in establishing the validity of the genre in the French art world (Harding 1979:81). He painted two major works in this early period, both of which were highly acclaimed; the first, *Massacre of Chios* (1824), illustrates an episode from the Greek war for Independence and was influenced by Gros' *Plague victims* (Jullian 1977:47). This painting was purchased by the government (Eitner 1964:7). *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827) (Plate 4) is a masterpiece of romanticism inspired by one of Byron's verses and ushers in a new way of painting the East in its emphasis on "sado-erotic sensation" (Bade 1979:10) centred around a melancholy Oriental potentate. Antiquity, the Orient, and death combine in this work, which was to have a profound effect both on the romantic style and on Orientalism.

Other works employing Oriental subject matter include Scheffer's monumental *Souliot women* (1827), a *juste milieu* painting influenced by Ingres illustrating a scene from the Turkish invasion of Greece (Boime 1980:47) and Géricault's drawing, *Mameluke restraining a horse* (Jullian 1977:104). Unlike many later works, which were based on artist's experience of the East, the paintings described above were studio works created in the imagination aand employing props and costumes from a variety of locations (Harding 1979:69).

In the following period, artists began to travel to the Orient, and particularly to Algeria, although their works continued to be infused with romantic, imaginative elements.

1830-1870

The "classical" period of Orientalism was ushered in by the conquest of Algiers and continued through the July Monarchy and well into the Second Empire (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:36). The genre became firmly established during this period and a number of artists of note emerged who came profoundly to influence the development of Orientalism. Most French Orientalists preferred to paint the Maghreb, possibly because of its accessibility after the Algerian conquest, although an interest also was expressed in Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean (Michalak in press:3). In the earlier part of this period, the most important painters in the genre were Delacroix, Decamps, Chassériau, Fromentin, and Dehondencq (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:36); Vernet's battle paintings also must be noted for their popularity and influence (Boime 1980:44).

Delacroix visited Morocco and Algeria in 1832 and the work he produced as a result of that journey had a strong impact on French art in general as well as on Orientalism. While *Sardanapalus* emphasized sensuous slaughter, his celebrated harem scene *Women of Algiers* (1834) (Plate 5) expressed a placid eroticism and innovative use of colour (Jullian 1978:82). Delacroix made sketches throughout his trip and many later paintings refer to his North African experiences, such as *Fanatics of Tangiers* (1851) (Plate 12) and *Horsemen at the fountain* (1862). Some works merely hint at Orientalism through their colouration and movement; despite the title, *Turkish women bathing* (1854) evinces only the slightest reference to the Orient (Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978:292). The artist exhibited Orientalist as well as other works at most Salons during his lifetime and influenced nearly all subsequent Orientalists (Jullian 1977:48).

Decamps first travelled in the Orient in 1828, and soon thereafter became highly acclaimed as a *juste milieu* painter and exhibited regularly at the Salon (Boime 1980:25). His Eastern scenes "became the model for all Orientalists for two generations" (Jullian 1977:58); the most popular of these were *The Turkish patrol* (1831), *The punishment of the hooks* (1837) (Plate 6), and the anecdotal *Coming out of a Turkish school* (1837). *The Turkish patrol* was praised for its 'realistic' depiction of the behavior of soldiers existing in a "tyrannical" regime (Stranahan 1889:226) and its attempts to capture a sense of the general style of the Ottoman polity. Decamps was celebrated for his ability to portray everyday aspects of Muslim life, although he sometimes exaggerated accessories to make his scenes appear more exotic, and occasionally placed Oriental figures in French landscapes (Mosby 1977:87,97).

Chassériau, influenced both by Ingres and Delacroix, was famous for the melancholy and passive women of his Algerian harem scenes (Michalak in press:10) and for portrayals of the "fatalistic Arab" (Fine Art Society 1978:8). He painted Oriental works prior to his visit to Algeria in 1846, including the portrait of *Ali ben Hamed, Caliph of Constantine* (1845), which created a new model for "ominous" male beauty (Jullian 1979:88). Chassériau also worked on the monumental Cour des Comptes commission before and after his Algerian trip; one panel destroyed during the Paris Commune, *Commerce bringing nations together* (1844-48), centered around East/West trade and emphasized the splendour of Oriental treasures (Sandoz 1974:51). Although harem scenes such as *Women taking a bath: interior of a Constantine harem* (1849) (Plate 10) were highly acclaimed, his masterpiece is considered to be *Arab horsemen taking away their dead after battle* (1850) (Plate 11), which was influenced by Girodet and Géricault as well as by Delacroix (Jullian 1977:50). Chassériau also painted biblical and patriotic subjects, but Orientalist scenes remained his favourite subject matter (Michalak in press:9).

The Algerian landscape was painted and repainted by Fromentin, who tended towards idealized scenes reminiscent of Dutch landscape painters (Jullian 1977:63). Fromentin made several trips to Algeria and his depictions of the countryside were great Salon successes and won him numerous medals, as well as the Legion of Honour in 1869 (Michalak in press:14). Paintings such as *Arab horsemen halting in a forest* (1868) and his most famous work, *Falconry in Algeria: the quarry* (1863) (Plate 16) were noted for their fine draughtsmanship and colouration (Philadelphia Museum of art 1978:305). Fromentin portrayed the colony as existing in pristine innocence and picturesque charm, and his many commissions generally demanded a variation on the theme of "horse, sky, tree, and Arab" (Michalak in press:14).

Dehondencq was greatly influenced by Delacroix and during the middle of the century evinced an interest in violent crowd scenes inspired by his visits to Morocco and Andalusia (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:36). He also painted a number of executions, including the famous *Execution of a Jewish woman* (n.d.) which depicted the Muslim penalty for false conversion (Jullian 1977:118). Dehondencq's Moroccan scenes, such as *The dance of the Negroes* (1874) acheived considerable success at the Salon, and the excessive violence found in many of his works presages a trend increasing in the next period.

Vernet painted the immensely successful five by twenty metre *Capture of Abd-el-Kader's train by the Duc d'Aumale* (1845) (Plate 9) for Louis-Phillipe's Hall of Battles at Versailles; this Algerian series also includes his *Battle of Isly* and *Capture of Bougie*. Of all painters during the July Monarchy, Vernet "mirrored most directly the king's taste" and official commissions during these years totalled 800,000 francs (Boime 1980:43). Vernet's battle paintings glorified

French heroism in Algeria, and did so in part by combining sweeping action with anecdotal scenes and exotic trappings. Other official battle paintings also emphasized theheroic nature of the Algerian enterprise, such as Dauzat's *Capture of Setif by General Baron de Galbois: homage of native chiefs to the Duc d'Orléans* (1844) (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:41). Vernet also executed Arabized biblical scenes; Jullian remarks that in *Judith's killing of Holofernes* the male character resembles the Algerian resistance leader Abd el-Kader (1977:86). He also painted several anecdotal scenes of Algeria, and his *Mass in Kabylia* (1852) explicitly referred to Napoleon III's colonial policies (ibid.:125).

Ingres continued to paint his European-looking harem nudes during this period, including several highly regarded versions of *Odalisque with slave* (Snell 1982:106). He painted one of his most famous works, *The Turkisk bath* (1862)(Plate 15), as an old man, and this painting with its hints of harem lesbianism was purchased by Prince Napoleon-Joseph Bonaparte (Whiteley 1977:88).

Two important painters appearing towards the end of this period were Guillaumet and Gérôme. Guillaumet, who visited Algeria eleven times in twenty years, was extremely successful at the Salon and his interest in the Algerian poor earned him the title of an "exotic Millet" (Jullian 1977:68). His *Famine in Algeria* (1869) bears affinities with Delacroix's *Chios*, and presents the dead and dying in the heroic light of tragic theatre. This work and the desolate

Desert (1867) brought him considerable recognition (Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978:383).

Gérôme, a student of Delaroche and Gleyre, was one of the most highly renowned painters in the world in the second half of the century (Fine Art Society 1978:34); his work cuts across periods as he first exhibited at the Salon in 1847 and continued to paint into the 1890's (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:63). In his earlier years he received monumental commissions from the State and executed eroticized scenes of antiquity for the Salon (Boime 1983:66). Around 1860, his Orientalist works began to attract considerable attention and works such as *Bashi-bazouk singing* (1859) and *Dance of the Almah* (1863), painted in a precise, "photo-realist" style, earned him the title of *peintre ethnographe* (Ettinghausen 1972:25). Gérôme also painted mysterious scenes such as *The prisoner* (1861)(Plate 14), which inspired a sonnet by Hérédia (Jullian 1977:65). He had influential political connections during the Second Empire and undertook diplomatic duties on his visits to the Orient (Boime 1983:68). Gérôme's Oriental scenes were reproduced extensively and the artist became extremely wealthy through the sale of his work (Fine Art Society 1978:35). A great number of his Eastern scenes were painted after 1870 and had a profound effect on artists of this later period.

Other painters of note exhibiting Orientalist works between 1839 and 1870 include Marilhat, who emphasized details of architecture in *Ruins of the El-Hakim mosque in Cairo* and in other paintings (Jullian 1977:193), and Gleyre, whose *Lost Illusions* (1847), *Egyptian modesty* (1838) (Plate 7), and the fantastic *Queen of Sheba* (1838) were highly successful. Bida, a student of Delacroix, received State commissions for his black and white drawings of the Orient; *The slave market* (1849), *Massacre of the Mamelukes* (1861), and the *Ceremony of the Dosseh* (1855) (Plate 13) were highly celebrated by critics and purchased by the government (Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978:365). The numerous lesser artists painting in this genre both during this period and after may, as a rule, be characterized as imitators of the major Orientalists cited above.

1870-1900

From about the 1860's on, Orientalism began to split into two broad directions: the first represents a continuation of the style elaborated by Gérôme, and emphasized minute detail and accessories. The second depicted scenes drawn from Orientalist literary works or fantasy and was characterized by a high degree of violence (Fine Art Society 1978:8). The genre began to decline in the 1880's, with Oriental elements becoming absorbed by Symbolist painting (Christian 1977). Most writers attribute the decline to the modernization of the Orient and loss of exoticism that had contributed so much to the popularity of the genre (Jullian 1977:170; Verrier 1979), but it is probable that this decline had more to do with the breakdown of the institutional system after 1880. Orientalism was an academic genre, and lost popularity along with other academic styles.

Gérôme continued to paint innumerable harem scenes, slave markets, and Muslim warriors during this period, and his ability to capture meticulous architectural detail in part was the result of his use of a camera (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:62). *Cleopatra and Caesar* (1872) inspired a poem by Robert Browning and other celebrated works include *The snake charmer* (1880s) (Plate 22), *The harem in the kiosk* (1881), and *Door of the mosque* (n.d.). This last painting depicted thirty severed heads, graphically painted, and was a huge success at the Salon (Stranahan 1889:331).

Although Regnault died in 1871, his work proved highly influential on academic painters until the end of the century (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:62). He exhibited a popular *Salome* at the Salon of 1869, after which he visited Morocco with Clairin, another Orientalist painter. He was noted for his scenes of violence and decapitation, and *Summary execution under the Moorish kings of Granada* (1870) (Plate 17), inspired by *Sardanapalus*, gave Orientalism new impetus when its popularity was beginning to wane (Jullian 1977:194). Had Regnault lived longer, it is likely that he would have taken Gérôme's place as the principal Orientalist of this period (ibid.:66).

Du Noüy, who studied under Gérôme, also was celebrated for his scenes of violence (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:62). One of the most famous paintings of the period, *The bearer of bad tidings* (1872), illustrated an episode from Gautier's *Roman de la momie*, in which the Pharaoh broods after having executed is messengers. He also executed other scenes from the *Momie*, including the highly successful triptych which included *Ramses in his harem* (1885) (Fine Art Society 1978:66); these works evoke the lassitude and sensuality of the harem, and the stylistic treatment recalls Ingres. Du Noüy painted a number of Orientalist history paintings as well as his more anecdotal *White slave* (1888) (Plate 23) and the sinister *Janissaries sleeping at the door of the seraglio* (1887), which was a Salon sensation (Jullian 1977:67).

Benjamin-Constant exhibited at every Salon but one between 1868 and 1888 (Sloane 1951:327) and executed portraits of international society as well as violent Orientalist scenes (Fine Art Society 1978:65). He visited Morocco in the 1870's and was inspired by the colourful life he found there; his highly successful Salon paintings showed the influence of this trip as well as that of Gérôme, Marilhat, Delacroix, and Regnault's *Summary execution* (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:62). Benjamin-Constant painted several harems as well as Oriental fantasy scenes such as *The favourites of the Emir* (1879) (Plate 20). Death and eroticism combined in his acclaimed *Sharif's justice* (Plate

21) (1880s) and, in general, it was themes such as these that brought him wide recognition at the Salon (Jullian 1977:186).

Clairin first travelled to Morocco with Regnault in 1869, and returned several times to this country and to Algeria after 1870. His work tends towards the anecdotal and exhibits a certain delicacy and love of detail but scenes are presented in a theatrical manner, possibly because of his close association with Sarah Bernhardt and the Paris theatre world (Fine Art Society 1978:65). He painted several harem scenes, such as *Feeding the flamingo in the harem* (1878) (Plate 19) and as a result of his Algerian trip became fascinated with dancers of the Ouled Nail tribe. *Ouled Nail women* (1895), along with other portraits of this type painted into the twentieth century, was very popular at the Salon (Jullian 1977:132)

One of the more interesting late Orientalists was Dinet, who settled in Algeria in 1884, converted to Islam, and made the pilgrimage to Mecca (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:72). He has been called "the last French Orientalist in the nineteenth century sense" (Fine Art Society 1978:57) and anecdotal scenes illustrating the supposed freedom of native life in Algeria achieved considerable success at the Salon. He was noted for the gentle eroticism of nudes such as those portrayed in *Moonlight at Laghouet* (1897) and *Young women amusing themselves by fighting* (1880s) (Plate 25), which depicts naked Berber girls wrestling. Dinet painted into the twentieth century and became a symbol of French/Muslim unity (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:73).

Rochgrosse was a highly popular Salon painter who illustrated works by Gautier and other writers. His *Salome* (n.d.) refers to Flaubert's *Salammbô*, but Jullian notes that despite his visits to North Africa, Rochgrosse's Oriental women tend to resemble Parisian prostitutes (1977:100). In paintings such as *The musician, an Assyrian princess* (1886), Art Nouveau elements are prefigured in the treatment of costume and decor.

Other Orientalists working in this period include Bouchard, who was influenced by Gérôme and painted typical Salon works such as the violent *Harem execution* (1880s) (Plate 24) and *The intrigue* (1880), and Vibert, whose *Eight sisters of the Pasha* (n.d.) also refers to Gérôme's work (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:69). Moreau evinced an interest in the mystical Orient, via the works of Delacroix, as evidenced by his numerous Salomes painted in the latter part of the century (Christian 1977). Finally, painters not ordinarily associated with the genre sometimes executed Oriental scenes, such as Renoir, who visited Algeria and painted an *Odalisque* (1870) which was compared to works by Delacroix (Jullian 1977:68).

B. The Orientalist, the Institutions and French Society

As an academic genre, the production of Orientalism was closely linked with the institutional framework surrounding much aesthetic production in France. The mechanisms by which these institutions operated were discussed above, with some attention directed to preferred forms of representation such as history painting. At the level of ideology, art roduced within these institutions claimed as its subject matter universal truth and representations of 'reality' (Duro 1982:23; Thevoz 1982:23). Regardless of stylistic technique, this art contended that meanings and values produced by it corresponded to the real; the advent of a stylistic hyperrealism served to make this apparent correspondence more seamless, as evidenced by the comparision of Gérôme's work to photographs in *National Geographic* by a recent writer (cf. Ettinghausen 1972:18).

The art institutions essentially were in the business of manufacturing the real, and at the same time were closely allied with the State and dominant classes, which in turn were attempting to inculcate nationalism, patriotism, and colonialism. It must be said again that to draw attention to this connection is not to insist upon a totalitarian control of images by the bourgeoisie or State apparatuses; Poulantzas cautions against seeing ideologies as "political number-plates worn by social classes on their backs" (1978:202). Rather, it is to suggest that the relationship of power existing between the State, institutions, and individual producers of Orientalist images was structured in such a way that a correspondence of ideological meanings emanating from these three is highly probable. As was mentioned above, much official and academic art was openly propagandistic; other work tended to be implicitly so.

It is important to locate the artist in his social and political context and examine the ways in which the notion of 'artist' was produced. The Orientalist painter was constituted both as a 'Frenchman' and as an 'artist' and both roles promoted a specific relationship between artists and the State and institutions. Berger views this relationship in terms of class and argues that artistic conventions:

> corresponded so closely to the social experience - or anyway to the social manners - of the class he was serving that they were not even seen as conventions but were thought of as the only way of recording and preserving eternal truth (1980:65).

The role of the artist to the institutions of artistic production and to the dominant classes administering them shifted after the 1789 revolution in association with the new ideologies asserting the primacy of the individual; the notion of individual creative genius was promulgated and the social status of artists began to rise as they ceased being seen as court lackeys or 'artisans' (Hadjinicolau 1978:40). Successful painters now began to identify with and be accepted into the political and social elite (Easton 1964:20), and the view that images, including those of the Orient, dropped from the sky into the imagination of the genius began to acquire force. This view does not take into account the pressures institutions were able to exert on artists desiring success; within the 'limit positions' determined by these institutions, of course, the Orientalist could give free rein to his imagination, but the structure of the system ensured that images explicitly contradicting official policy would not be tolerated. To put this point somewhat differently:

> Surely each artist projected his personal perspective of non-Western lands; yet, their works are linked by an underlying structure, a discourse about Asia and Africa which generalized the particular and mythified the real (August 1978:174).

Much has been made of the supposed anti-establishment, anti-bourgeois stance of nineteenth century artists, particularly those identifying themselves as romantics; in reality, the relationship of the artists to the bourgeoisie was complex and not as antagonistic as it appears (Boime 1980:81,184; Clark 1973; Wolff 1981:11). Many artists and writers did complain about the crassness and narrowness of the bourgeoisie although most came from this class; their rather free-floating class position based on the concept of genius enabled them to identify with aristocratic values (Boime 1980:184). During this period, the aristocracy (or, more correctly, aristocracies - feudal and Napoleonic) continued to maintain a certain amount of political power, although in subordination to the bourgeoisie (Johnson 1975; Poulantzas 1978:176), and elements of aristocratic ideology continued to obtain as evidenced by the desire of many rich bourgeois to become titled (Boime 1980:184). The stated rejection of the bourgeoisie by artists does not appear to involve a rejection of State legitimation of artists through support and awards, or of 'high society', which combined *haute bourgeois*, titled people, and the elite of the aesthetic world.

Orientalism was strongly affiliated with academic and government institutions, and it stands to reason that artists painting in this genre were less likely than others to reject the rich and powerful patrons who provided their livlihood. As well, many Orientalists associated with and cultivated the elite, and some deliberately projected a wealthy and dandified image (Easton 1964:20). The bohemianism affected by others, and by writers such as Gautier, seems to have existed more as a style of manners than a fundamental rejection of the power structure; similarly, the dislike of the bourgeoisie also appears to relate to questions of style. Gautier's connections with both the July Monarchy and Second Empire as been noted, Vernet and Gros were closely allied with the July Monarchy and First Empire respectively, and Gérôme's diplomatic work during the Second Empire and Third Republic has been mentioned. Many other artists were sent on government missions and fêted by various monarchs and presidents (Boime 1980). This indicates that Orientalists enjoying fame and financial success in their lifetime did not exist in genuine opposition to the social and institutional system, dominated by the bourgeoisie. The degree to which artists consciously served the interests of these classes is at present open to question; Duro argues that Orientalist painters openly served the bourgeoisie by producing images of the East "designed to mask class tensions in France" (1982:23). It is perhaps more accurate to suggest that these artists did not as a rule question seriously ideologies of nationalism and colonialism.

Orientalist painters clearly benefited from the colonial relationship. Algeria in particular became accessible to artists, and such situations as Delacroix's visit to an Algerian harem, which normally would be unthinkable given North African standards of veiling and seclusion of women, were made possible by the French conquest. Most Orientalists wholeheartedly supported colonial values and internalized attitudes towards the East extant in France during the century (Jullian 1977). This affected the aesthetic presentation of the Muslim world, both by artists who actually visited the Orient and by those who never travelled beyond Europe. Both were selective about the kinds of images they chose to accentuate, and these often bore little resemblance to true conditions in the East. While picturesque works, such as those executed by Fromentin, may appear more 'real' than obvious fantasy scenes, both frequently share assumptions which find their way into the paintings. Chassériau and Regnault visited North Africa for aesthetic material, but the one emphasized fatalism and melancholy and the other painted scenes evocative of violence and fantasy; the work of both referred to a complex of ideas about the Orient which structured the artists' perceptions of these countries. While works executed by painters who had been to the East often exhibited precise, accurate renditions of details of architecture and costuming, treatment of subject matter seems no more 'true to life' than in paintings by Orientalists who had never seen the colonies.

VI. The Orientalist Genre: Twenty-Five Paintings

This chapter discusses twenty-five Orientalist paintings in detail in order to investigate ideological meanings produced by individual works. The popularity of Orientalism was such that literally hundreds of paintings of this type were executed during the century; artists painting the Maghreb alone numbered nearly fifty (Jullian 1977), and many depicted other parts of the Muslim Orient as well as fantasy scenes. The paintings analyzed below were selected from the work of the most popular and influential painters, and an attempt was made to include a variety of scenes representing the most typical subjects found in the genre such as the battle, the harem, fantasy scenes, scenes of everyday life, and so on. The works are arranged in roughly chronological order, with paintings from each historical period presented.

For each work, the scene depicted by the artist is described, with attention directed towards the formal arrangement of figures and background accoutrements. The way in which these create ideological meaning is discussed, both in terms of specific elements and in regard to absences referring to underlying attitudes. Finally, key themes expressed in each painting are listed.

The Plates

Plate 1.

Girodet, Anne-Louis
Revolt in Cairo

This painting illustrates the last battle in an Egyptian revolt directed against the French presence at the time of Napoleon's invasion. The action is dominated by the conflict between the French officer to the left, who carries a sword and runs forward in an offensive position, and the naked Arab to the right, who holds a light-skinned, luxuriously dressed young man in one arm and slashes a scimitar with the other. The two secondary characters are the French officer in the centurion-like helmet, who carries a sword and is attempting to grab the Arab, and a nude, turbanned black below him. The latter raises a bloodstained dagger and carries the severed head of a hussar in the hand that is wrapped around the Arab's leg. Fierce-looking fighters in Mameluke armour struggle with Frenchmen in the background, and the dead are strewn about beneath them.

The savagery of the Egyptian fighters is expressed through ~~their~~ nudity, the vicious looks on their faces, and the severed head of the Christ-like hussar. This is juxtaposed against the uniformed French soldiers on the one hand, and the aristocratic, pampered young Arab on the other. The latter's sword is not bloody, and he has fainted in the arms of the nude fighter; this young man seems to represent the effete decadence of the Egyptian ruling elite, whereas the naked fighters represent barbarism. The French are intent on victory, but reasoned. This reading is suggested both by the painting itself and by evidence that Napoleon commissioned the work to counter reports of French atrocities during the revolt; the general had the insurgents, many of whom were women, decapitated and their heads rolled into a public square. Depiction of Egyptian savagery would help to justify French behavior (Brown University 1982:52).

Themes: death, savagery, ferocity, French heroism, decadence, cruelty, sensuality, opulence.

Girodet, Anne-Louis
Revolt in Cairo (1810)

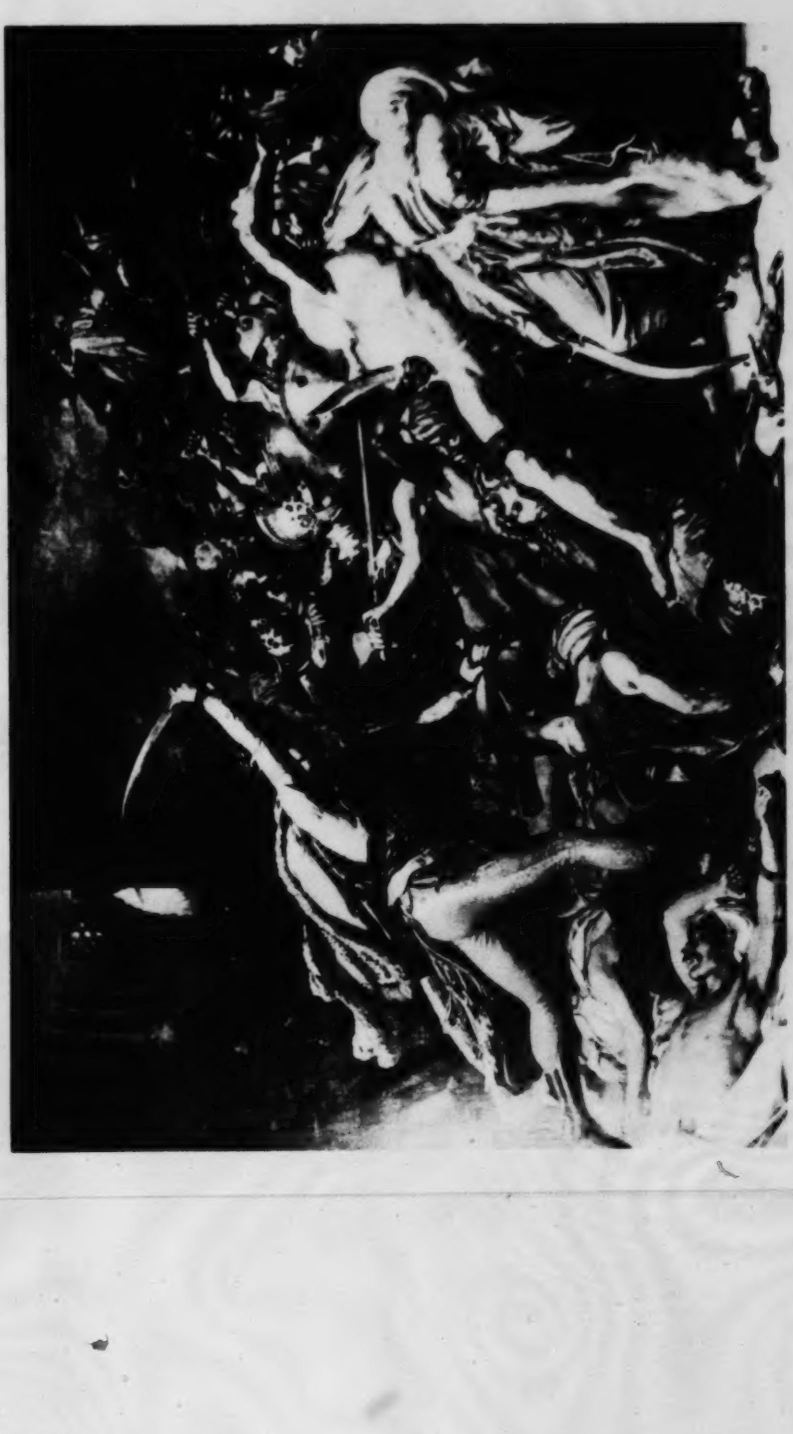


Plate 2.

Gros, Baron Antoine-Jean
Battle of Aboukir (1806)

This painting illustrates General Murat's victory over Mustapha Pasha during Napoleon's Egyptian campaign. The uniformed Murat rides a white horse and wears a composed expression. To his right, the pasha's son offers a scimitar to the French general with one hand, and holds his father's arm with the other to keep the latter from falling off his horse. The pasha and his son are white and richly dressed, in contrast to most other Egyptian fighters, who are black and naked. According to the 1806 Salon catalogue, the basket worn around the neck of the fallen Egyptian the left foreground contains the severed head of a French general (Brown University 1982:80). The background depicts a fort with a minaret, and dead bodies dot the foreground.

The focus of this scene is Murat, who with his white horse is the most clearly delineated figure in the work. He is calm in victory, for the offering of the scimitar suggests that he has won the battle despite the continuation of the action. He is positioned higher than the pasha and son, with his horse also placed above the falling mount of the pasha. The latter's facial expression is desperate, as he vainly reaches to avoid falling. The son, on the other hand, wears a pleading expression, and his white skin and pink clothing makes him appear softened by a life of luxury. The catalogue description of the barely visible head in the basket suggests the barbarism of the Egyptians, and the naked black slaves refer to savagery and the hierarchical Ottoman society: in this scene both are cowed by French military superiority. A steady line of French soldiers appears to the left, and the tangle of Arabs attempting to flee depicted to the right adds to the contrast between the two groups.

Themes: French heroism, victory, barbarism, decadence, tyranny

Gros, Baron Antoine-Jean
Battle of Aboukir (1806)

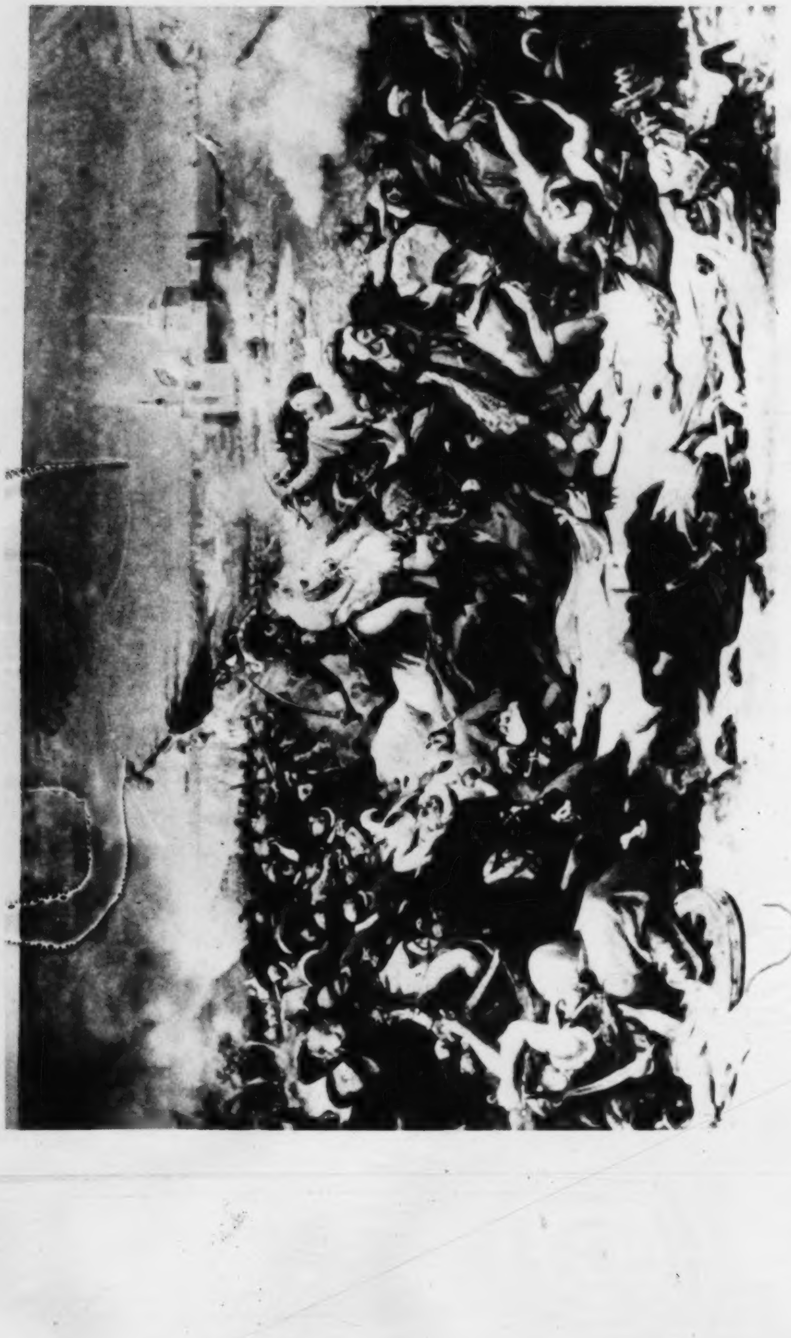


Plate 3.

Ingres, Jean-August Dominique
The grande odalisque (1814)

The white-skinned odalisque reclines in luxurious surroundings, which include an incense burner, pipe, embroidered draperies, and a fur throw. She wears nothing but a turban and jewellry, and a large jewelled belt lies at her side; she holds a fan make of peacock feathers. This woman gazes limpidly at the viewer, but her body is turned away towards the darkness, so that interest focuses on her elongated back.

The odalisque is presented as a captive jewel in an equally jewel-like setting of perfect luxury. Gautier wrote that she epitomizes "enslaved beauty in its serene dejection" (1855 in Snell 1982:108) and in this painting she appears as an object whose privacy is rendered visible by the artist and, through him, the viewer. The turning away of her body suggests that some mystery remains, but the passivity of her expression and its "calculated charm" (Berger 1972:) implies that this could be uncovered at the whim of the voyeur. The hot-house atmosphere is accentuated by the perfection of her skin, which is unmarked and points to a life lived indoors in total comfort.

Themes: passivity, submission, the idyll voyeurism, opulence, captivity

Ingres, Jean-Auguste Dominique
The grande odalisque (1814)

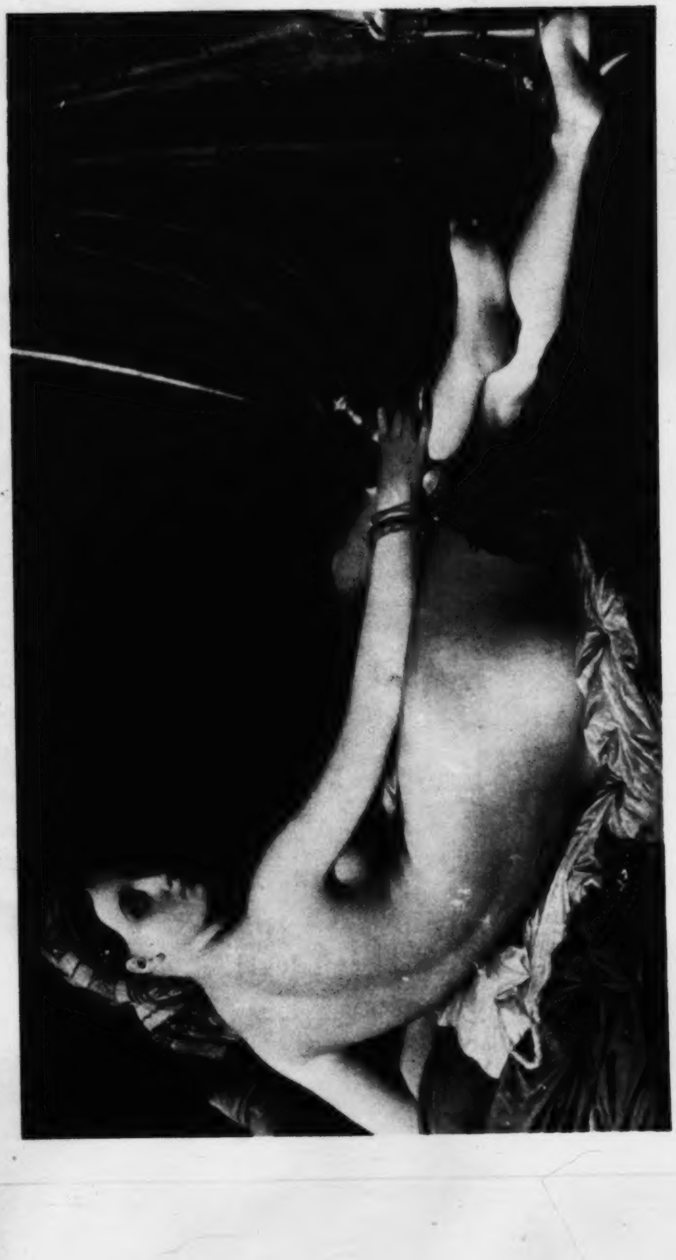


Plate 4.

Delacroix, Eugéne
Death of Sardanapalus (1827)

This painting depicts the execution of Sardanapalus' concubines and horses ordered by the ruler at the moment of his death. The potentate lies on his bed, staring off into space, indifferent to the action around him. In the rear, shadowy figures struggle or move about, and one victim hangs herself. In the foreground, a naked woman is having her throat cut; others are dying or already dead, and one sprawls across the bed at the tyrant's feet. To the left, a naked black is attempting to control a terrified horse, and to his right lies a pile of weapons and treasure. The victims, including the horse, are jewelled, as is Sardanapalus, who wears rings on his toes. The room is opulent, and carved elephant heads adorn the four corners of the bed. The servants carrying out the tyrant's orders are intent on their work; Sardanapalus himself is an island of calm in the melee.

The primary theme of this work is the absolute power wielded by the tyrant and his ability to dispense life and death to those around him. He maintains control over people, animals, and objects, and evinces a melancholy or boredom with his power and wealth. The nudity of the women accentuates their surrender to his will, and they become objects of possession on the same level as the treasure or horse. They are presented as beautiful in their death throes, particularly the one in the right foreground who gazes beseechingly at Sardanapalus. The servants express complete loyalty to their master, whose cruelty is inhumane yet compelling. One has the sense that his mind is on higher things; facing death, people and wealth mean nothing to him, his pleasures are over as he contemplates his own future.

Themes: death, tyranny, power, barbarism, sensuality, treasure, passivity, opulence, noble animals

Delacroix, Eugéne
Death of Sardanapalus (1827)

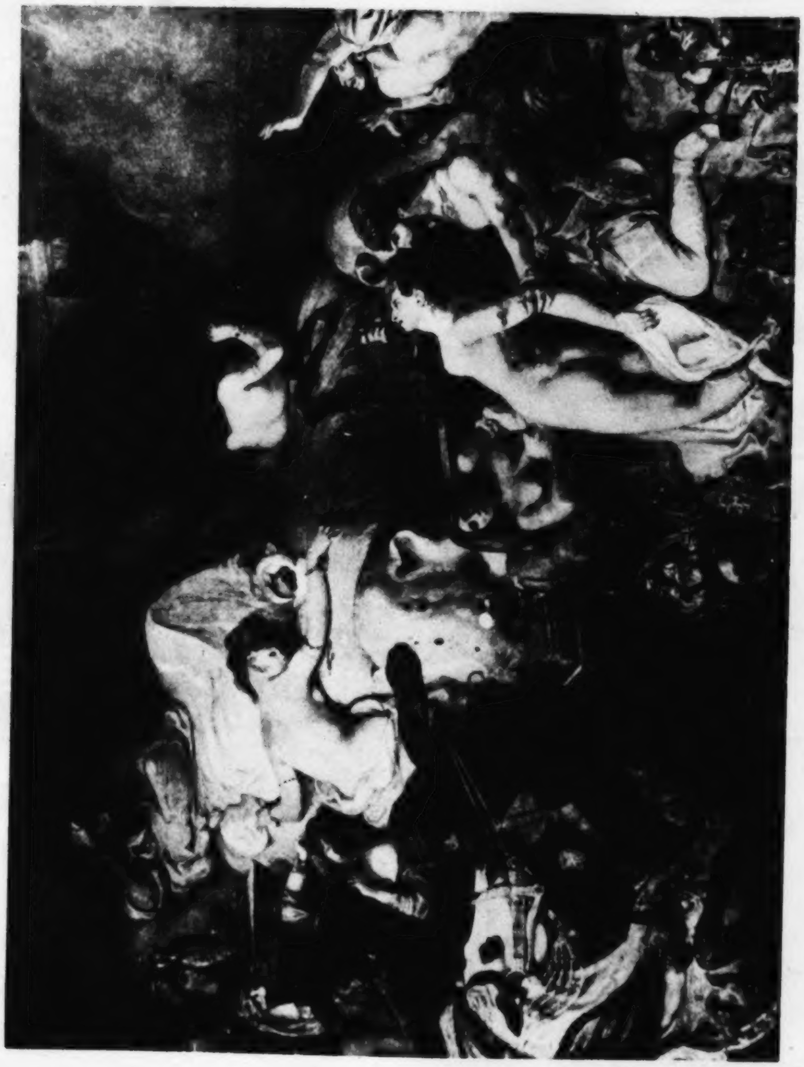


Plate 5.

Delacroix, Eugéne
Women of Algiers (1834)

This painting depicts three luxuriously dressed, white women sitting in a harem, attended by a black slave. The setting focuses on colour and texture; tiled walls, rugs and cushions, a hookah, and the costumes all are detailed and contribute to the sense of luxurious indolence. Two women near the hookah sit up and appear to be speaking while the third half relines on cushions off to one side and stares into space. The black servant is leaving the room but has turned her head; the white women pay no attention to her.

This scene is pervaded by a sense of sleepy luxury and timeless lassitude. These well-fed women appear as beautiful ornaments as they sit passively in this room where nothing ever changes, whiling away time with desultory chat and the hookah. The woman to the left exhibits a touch of melancholy as she stares at nothing in particular. This painting combines the idyll of the harem with boredom and the feeling of stasis associated with the Orient; less explicitly sensual than many other harem paintings, the scene reminded Delacroix of antiquity and caused him to remark "this is woman as I understand her" (in Michalak in press:13). As with most works of this type, a voyeurists element is apparent in the European's ability to render visible the secrets of the harem.

Themes: the idyll, passivity, indolence, luxury, melancholy, captivity

Delacroix, Eugéne *Women of Algiers* (1834)

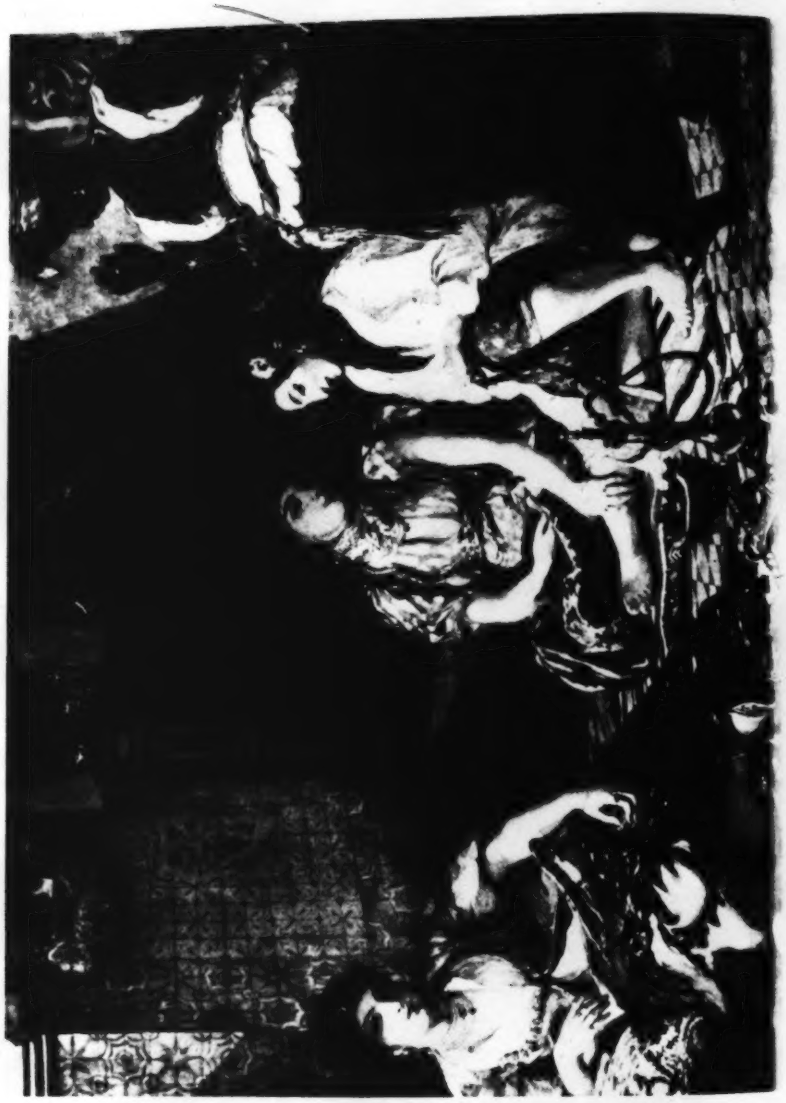


Plate 6.

Decamps, Alexandre Gabriel
The punishment of the hooks (1837)

In this festival of death, a crowd watches the spectacle of torture. Bound men are being thrown off a roof to be impaled on huge, hooked spikes fastened to the walls of a fortress-like building. The crowd has pushed to the wall and forms a packed mass; in the foreground several secondary scenes occur. To the far right, a cowering man is being beaten by a mounted Arab, presumably a soldier. To his left, a group of men on horseback pay no attention to the executions, and to their left, an imperious-looking, light-skinned bearded man in a white turban also evinces indifference. A women in the foreground hold her head in despair as a child clutches at her, and directly in front of her two dogs sit near rib bones strewn on the ground. Armed men dot the ramparts; some watch the main scene, others do not.

This painting juxtaposes savagery with indifference; the barbarism of the executions excites the crowd yet elicits no horror from the armed guards and mounted onlookers, who appear to be used to such events. Both the crowd and the guards are shown to be without mercy or humanitarian sentiments. No attention is paid to the distraught woman, and the incident in which the man is being beaten appears gratuitous and unconnected to the executions.

The torture of the hooks emphasizes a barbaric cruelty which is inherent in the society in which it is depicted; the tortures are institutionalized, as evidenced by the numerous armed guards and number of victims (at least three). Thus implicit reference is made to a tyrannical, violent government as well as to a fanatical populace.

Themes: death, barbarism, cruelty, fanaticism, tyranny, spectacle

Decamps, Alexandre-Gabriel
The punishment of the hooks (1837)

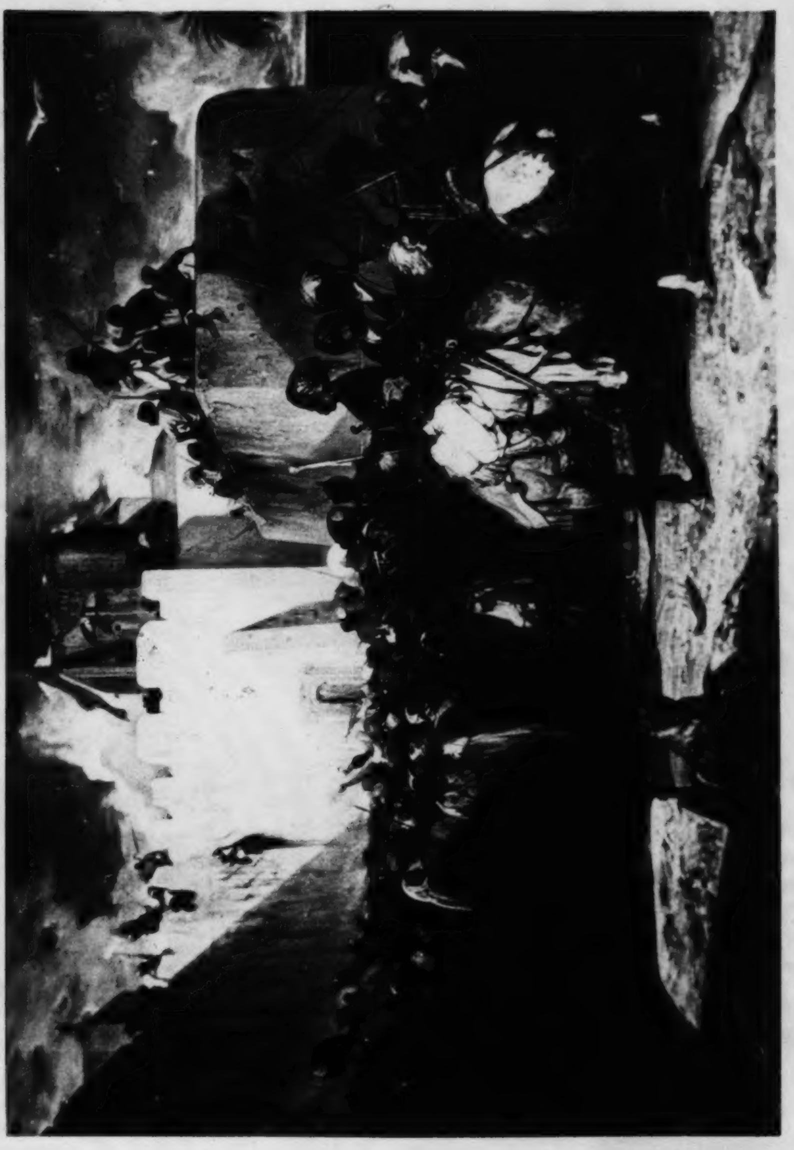


Plate 7.

Gleyre, Marc-Gabriel-Charles
Egyptian modesty (1838)

In this scene, a naked slave girl covers her face as a horseman grasps her right arm and another female nude looks on. The second nude is tethered to a stake in the foreground, and the scene is taking place in front of a ruined column and a large palm tree. A town is shown in the background, and to the right figures can be seen in shadow. The horseman is armed both with a sword and spear and is completely clothed.

The ironic title of the painting indicates that the woman's nakedness is being contrasted with her attempts to cover her face, which is turned away from the horseman; it seems that the traditional custom of veiling is being mocked. The man maintains complete power over the women, as evidenced by his positional superiority, his weapons, and the fact that he is dressed whereas they are naked. Moreover, his smile exhibits a touch of sadism. The thoroughbred also is dominated by the man. His ability to control his slaves is pervaded by sexual elements, with which the viewer is encouraged to identify through the detailed frontal presentation of the nude women. The tethered, seated woman's facial expression and coyness suggests that she is not altogether displeased by the situation in which she finds herself, or that she finds the other woman's discomfiture amusing. The association of the scene with ruins reinforces the connection between past and present and the sense of the timelessness of such scenes.

Themes: captivity, tyranny, domination, sexuality, the past, the thoroughbred

Gleyre, Marc-Gabriel-Charles
Egyptian modesty (1838)

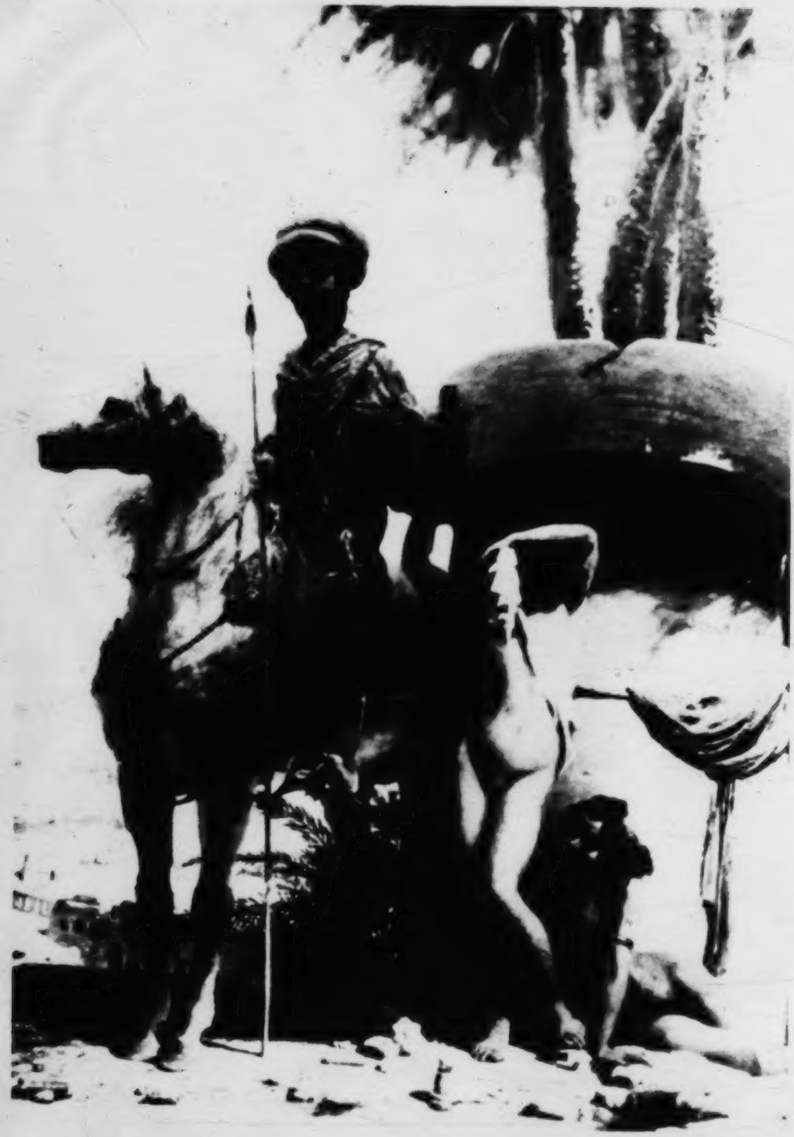


Plate 8.

Vernet, Emile-Jean Horace
Judah and Tamar (1840)

This painting is an example of an Arabized bible scene and illustrates the seduction of Judah by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. In this scene they are bargaining over his payment for her sexual favours. Judah is dressed as an Algerian *shaykh* in his wool burnous; a camel carrying a sword and detailed saddle stand behind him. Tamar appears as a harem beauty, complete with bangles and coins in her hair, and the fairness of her skin contrasts with Judah's swarthiness. She covers her face to hide her identity yet exposes a leg and breast. The background is an idyllic, pastoral scene, reminiscent of Italian religious paintings.

Paintings such as this explicitly employ Orientalist conventions in their treatment of biblical subjects; the detailed costuming the camel and its elaborate saddle in this work strengthen the association between contemporary Arabs and biblical characters. The former are seen in a light that establishes their status as objects, and as primitive beings more connected to the past than to the present. This association was common at the time and made clear in the writings of Gautier and others, as noted above.

Themes: sensuality, the past, natural beauty, the idyll

Vernet, Emile-Jean Horace
Judah and Tamar (1840)

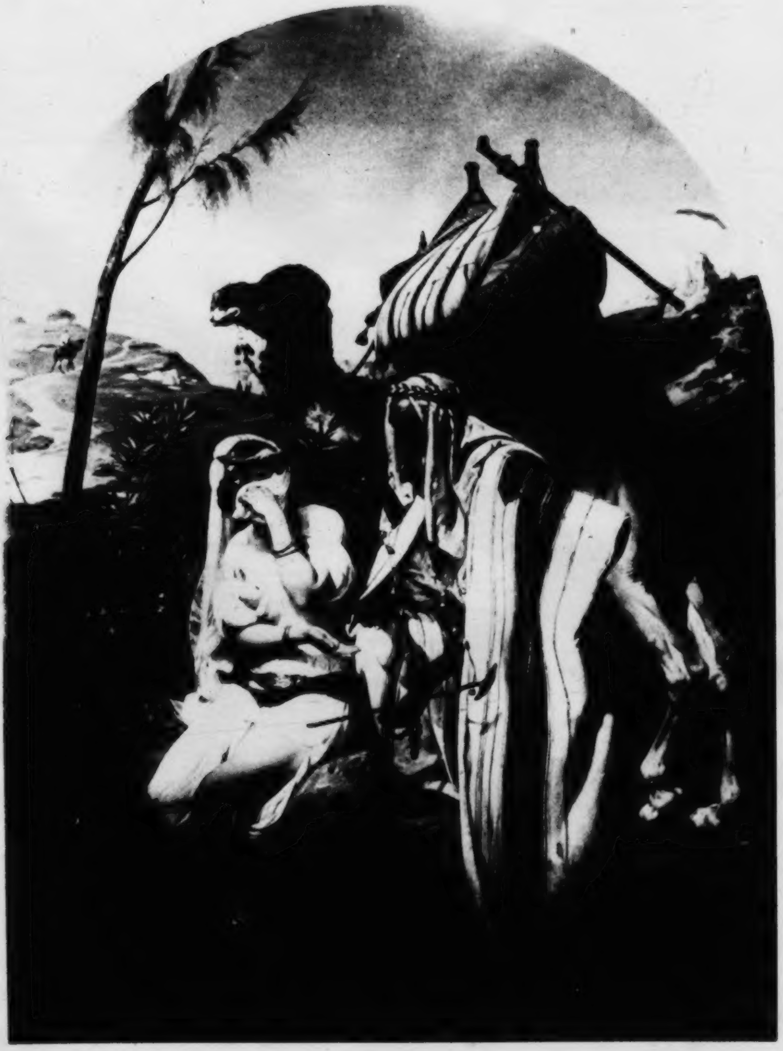


Plate 9.

Vernet, Emile-Jean Horace
The capture of Abd-el-Kader's smala by the Duc d'Aumale:detail (1845)

This is a detail of the twenty-three metre canvas at Versailles illustrating a decisive French victory in the Algerian war. This particular scene depicts black slaves attempting to load luxuriously dressed, white women into palinquins. Because of the transparency of their clothing, the women appear half-nude as they struggle to keep their seats in the palinquin. The rugs on which they sit are detailed, as are the features of the palinquins, such as the hangings and ostrich feathers topping the frames. In the painting as a whole, this scene occurs to the right of the main action, which is a frenzied battle scene filled with mounted Frenchmen, Arabs, naked blacks, terrified gazelles, and so forth.

The painting as a whole presents this battle as a panoramic series of episodes, characterized at the time as "dramatic". "picturesque", and, in Baudelaire's words, a "cabaret" (Soustiel and Thornton 1975:36). The French clearly dominate the course of events and in the scene illustrated here it is suggested that the French soldiers will soon dominate these women who are unable to escape. A touch of titillation is provided by the transparent clothing and the sense that the women are a prize for the victors. Their semi-nudity yet luxurious headgear and trappings accentuate their status as passive objects around whom the battle swirls, on the same level as the livestock visible behind them. The presence od black slaves refers to the hierarchical society which is being 'civilized'.

Themes: war, domination, captivity, picturesque customsa, passivity, and the view that women are a prize of war.

Vernet, Emile-Jean Horace
The capture of Abd-el Kader's smala by the Duc d'Aumale: detail (1845)

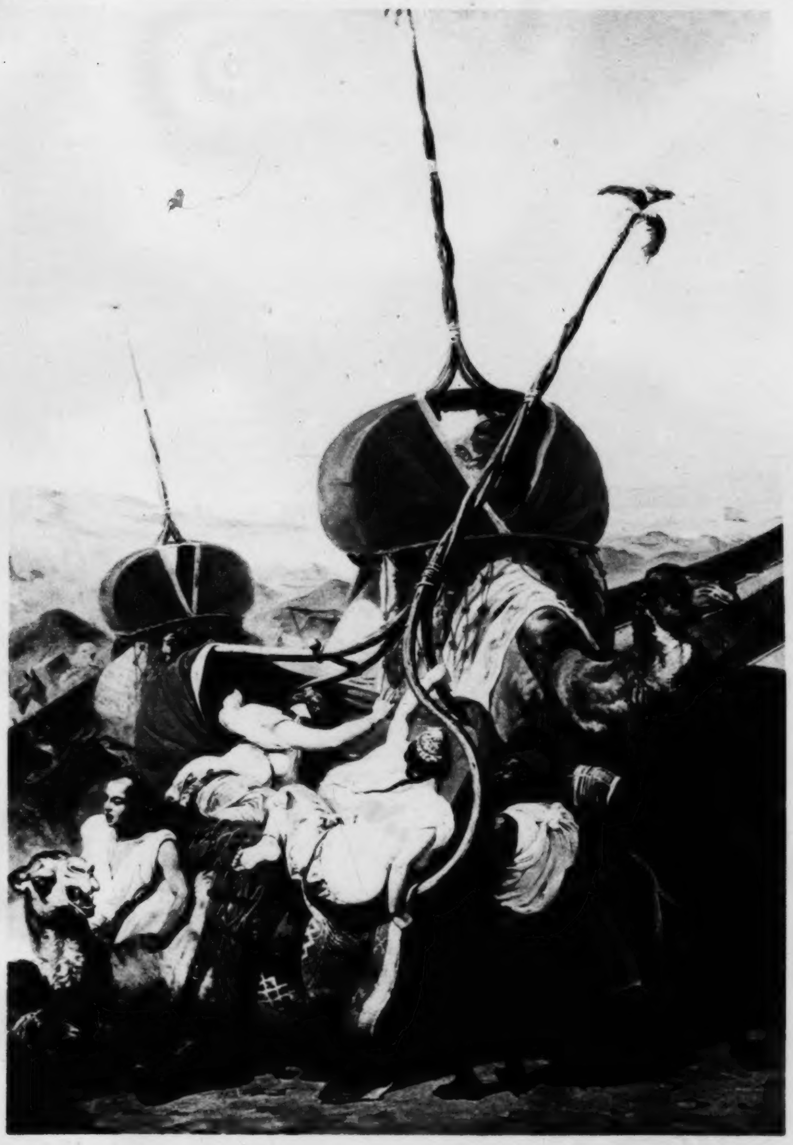


Plate 10.

Chassériau, Thèodore
Woman taking a bath: interior of a Constantine harem (1849)

A nude white woman is being attended to by two servants; on her left, a black slave dries her with a cloth, and on her right, an older woman draws clothing out of an elaborately decorated chest. The background is dark but luxurious, and at the bottom of the painting a large bath is visible. The bather gazes at the viewer and is presented so that most of her body can be seen, although she turns away slightly. Chassériau painted several versions of this scene.

The viewer is invited to penetrate the privacy of the bath and observe the beautiful white woman being pampered by her servants. She has become an object of contemplation, as have the servants, who appear as no more than props for her beauty. The unsmiling yet direct gaze at the viewer creates the sense that the bather is aware of his presence yet passively accepts it. Gautier continually praised Chassériau's harem women for their mystery and "incurable melancholy" due to their recognition of the impending death of their race (Jullian 1977:62; Sandoz 1974:58).

A note should be made of the title as well: this scene is presented as occurring in Constantine, which was one of the larger Algerian cities devastated by the war. The artist visited the area in 1846, and one year prior to this a French colonial official wrote of the "terrifying state of misery and deprivation" of the indigenous population (1845 in Bennoune 1976:209). Setting an idyllic bath scene with a beautiful naked woman in this city implies not only French possession but that the opulent idyll of the past continues to exist despite conquest.

Themes: voyeurism, luxury, the idyll, passivity, possession, melancholy

Chassériau, Thèodore
Woman taking a bath: interior of a Constantine harem (1849)

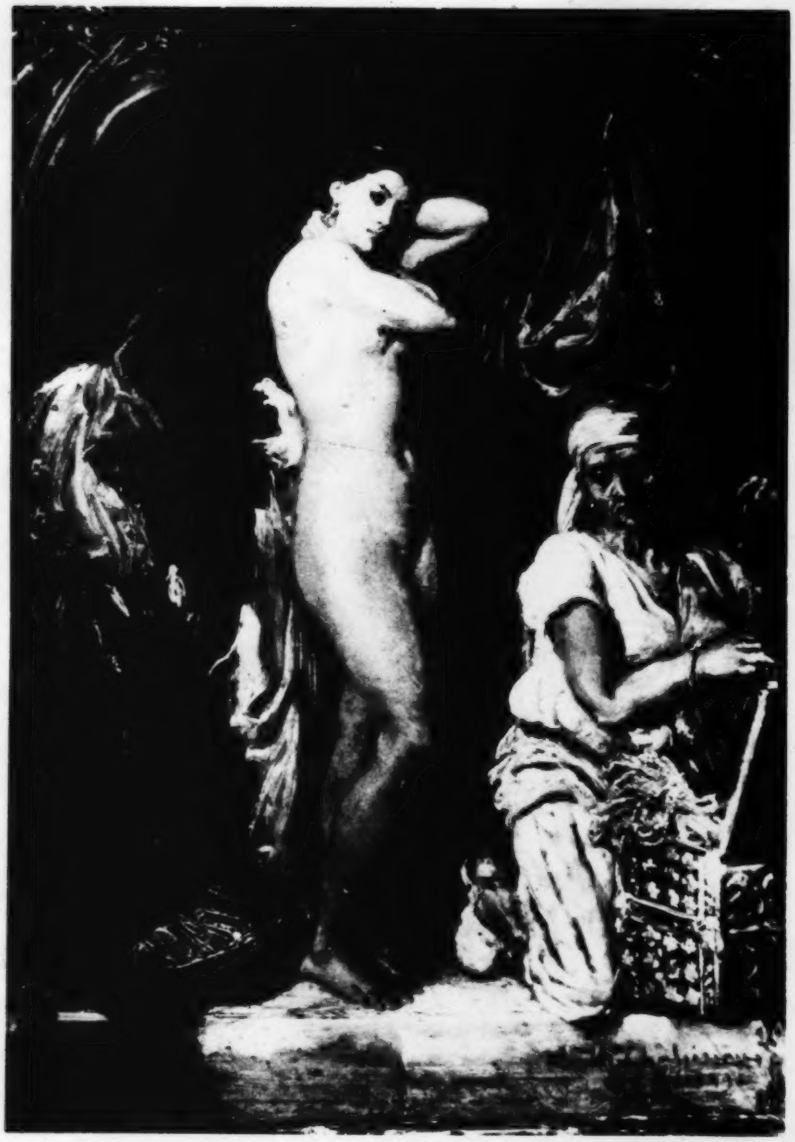


Plate 11.

Chassériau, Thèodore
Arab horsemen taking away their dead after battle (1850)

This scene illustrates the aftermath of a battle between Algerian tribesmen and French soldiers, although elements in the presentation may have been influenced by Hugo's *La bataille perdue* from *Orientales* (Sandoz 1974:317). Weapons and dead Arabs sprawl in the foreground, and to the left others are being loaded onto horses by black slaves. At the centre of the painting a mounted, robed man surveys the scene, and in the distance figures perform actions similar to those taking place in the foreground. The landscape is desolate.

The melancholy of defeat is the primary theme of this painting: the Algerians have lost, and the French remain an unseen presence in this scene. The Arab defeat is idealized by the presentation of the dead, particularly the semi-nude corpse in the foreground, which is beautifully delineated and almost noble in its pose. The French had killed him with a clean thrust into the chest, without the savagery of messy severed body parts; reference to French honour and heroism in warfare is implicit. The mounted man watching the scene is the leader of the Algerians and his presentation expresses a certain heroism as well, as if he is a truly noble enemy who has been defeated after a fair, honourable fight between equals. The presence of black slaves, however, hints at underlying savagery and the autocratic nature of Muslim society.

Themes: death, melancholy, nobility, heroism, war, tyranny

Chassériau, Thèodore
Arab horsemen taking away their dead after battle (1850)

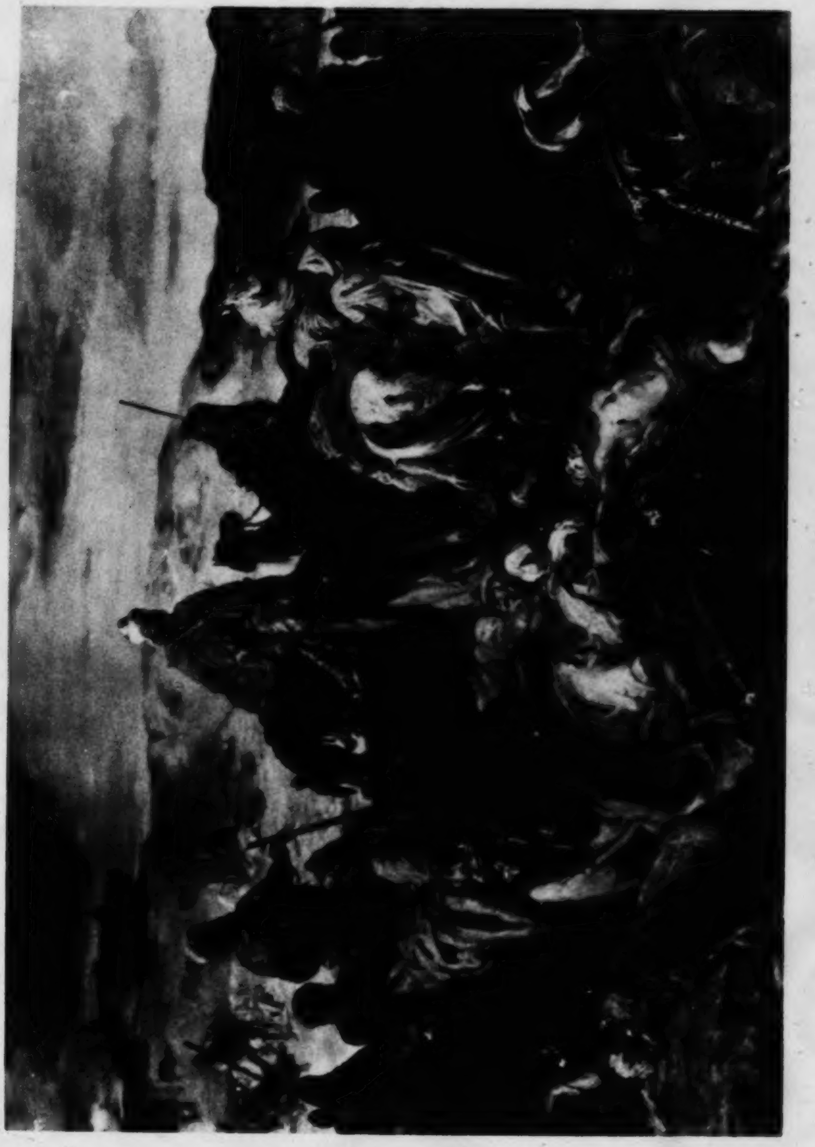


Plate 12.

Delacroix, Eugène
Fanatics of Tangier (1851)

This painting depicts members of the *Yssaoui* sect after prayer, who traditionally engaged in practices associated with ecstatic religions. In the centre of the scene, four wild-eyed men run forward; others with outstretched arms and sticks can be discerned in the background. To the right, a large flag is being carried to one side of a hooded man riding a horse. Figures observing the scene dot the rooftops, and to the right a group of people watch while others flee. In the foreground, a man has fallen and is being grasped by one of the four ecstatic men.

The ecstatic practices of this cult are presented as bizarre spectacle; Gautier refered to these Arabs as "shuddering in intermittent spasms like galvanized frogs" (in Snell 1982:81). The frenzied men point to the unpredictable, uncontrollable religious passions associated with Islam, and to its inherent falsity which serves to produce such sects. The man on the horse ~~is~~ presented an an important personage associated with the event, and the seriousness of his expression and the fact that he is mounted and riding near a flag suggests official power sanctioning the public spectacle. The fleeing people imply that members of the sect might become dangerous.

Themes: fanaticism, spectacle, tyranny, religion

Delacroix, Eugène
Fanatics of Tangiers (1851)

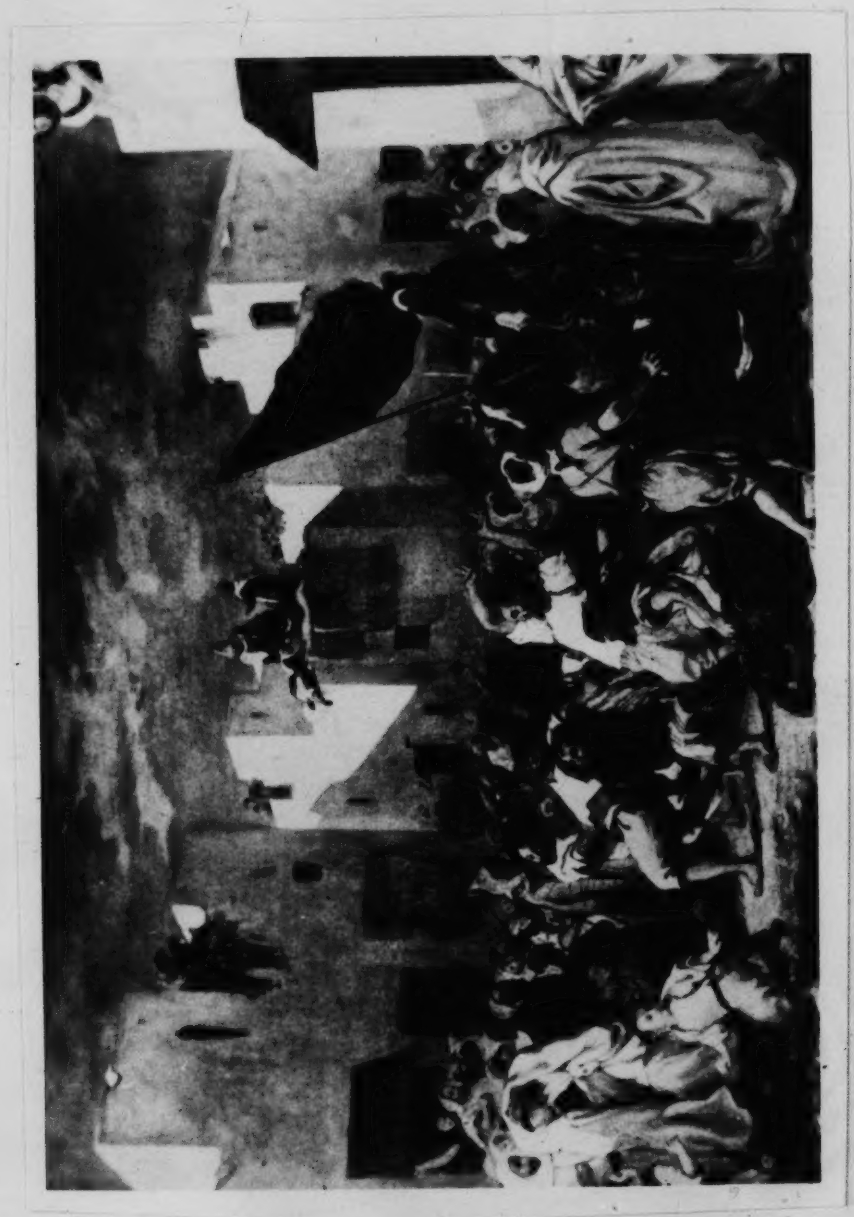


Plate 13.

Bida, Alexandre
The ceremony of the Dosseh (1855)

A religious procession is taking place in which a mounted man walks his horse over the bodies of believers who have lain down in a public square. The man looks up to the heavens and extends his hands; he is elderly and is assisted by two servants or acolytes. The men lying on the ground appear to be doing so willingly. One is in the process of joining the line of bodies, another prays, and to the right another clutches his chest and looks to the skies. Men carry banners and poles topped by the crescent, and in the background people have extended their arms towards the scene. At the far left, an armed guard keeps an eye on the event.

This work focuses on Islamic religious fanaticism and the fatalism and tyranny inherent in this faith. The ecstatic expression of the old man and some of the participants expresses the irrationality of the ceremony, and the presence of the guard suggests the institutionalized nature of the event. The barbarism of the scene is presented as spectacle, and Gautier remarked that "the only one who feels any emotion among this multitude of fanatics is the horse; he lowers his head, sniffs, and lifts his hooves delicately in order not to injure anyone" (1855 in Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978:365). The implicit message here is that the Muslim is enslaved by his religion and hence is an irrational creature of a lower order than the noble thoroughbred.

Themes: fanaticism, tyranny, spectacle, noble animals

Bida, Alexandre
The ceremony of the Dosseh (1855)

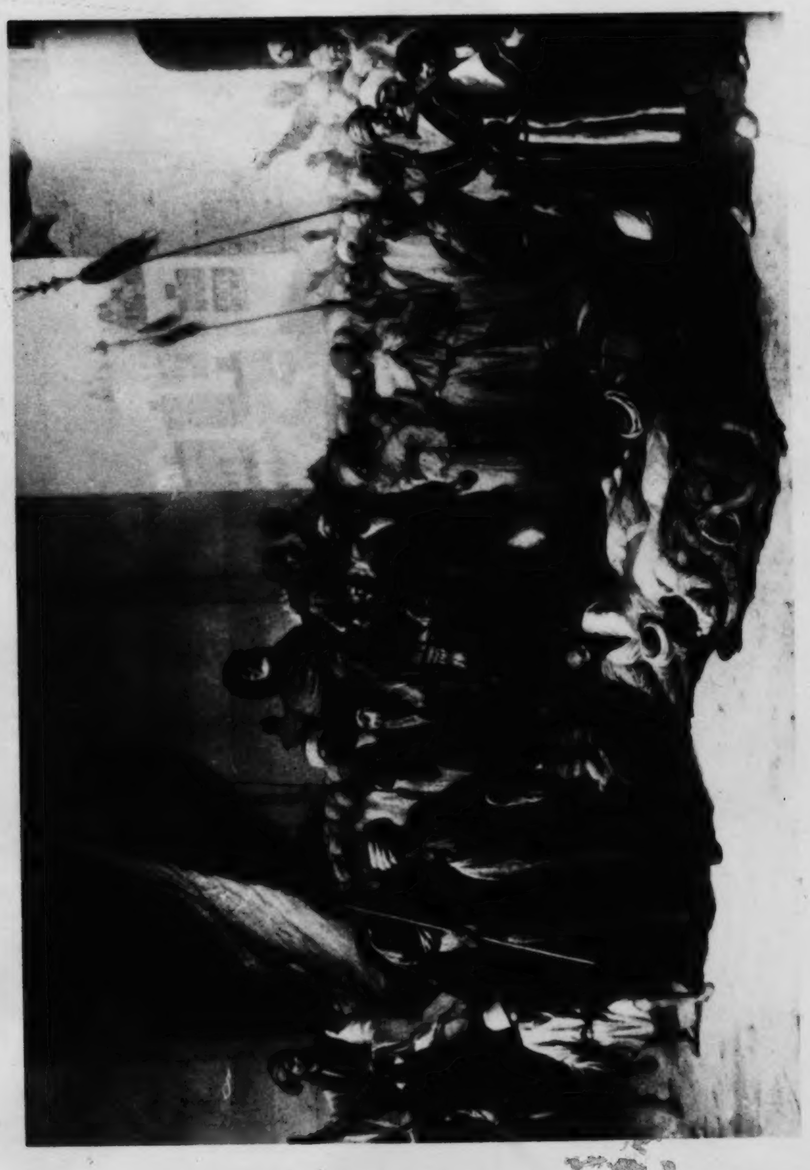


Plate 14.

Gérôme, Jean-Léon
The prisoner (1861)

In this painting, oarsmen are rowing a prisoner across the Nile near Luxor; the prisoner is handcuffed and bound and lies rigidly as another man sings to him and "taunts him with a nasty song" (Ackerman 1972:50). The singer is dressed as an Arnaut guard, while the prisoner is in white with a large white turban. An armed man sits in the bow of the boat and observes the scene impassively. In the distance, the ruins of Luxor Temple stand out against the evening sky, as do two minarets. Feluccas dot the river, also in the distance.

Captivity is the primary theme characterizing this work, and it is accompanied by a touch of sadism expressed by the Arnaut singing to the prisoner. The rather offhand cruelty of the scene is accentuated by the mysteriousness of the event; one does not know why the man has been taken prisoner, where he is going, or why he is being sung to, although the presence of the Arnaut suggests that orders have been issued from above. The juxtaposition of ancient ruins and a contemporary scene reinforces the sense of timelessness and the typification of the Orient as past its prime when compared to the glories of the antiquity. Captivity is presented here as being without cause, arbitrary and timeless.

Themes: captivity, cruelty, autocracy, the past, mystery

Gérôme, Jean-Léon
The prisoner (1861)

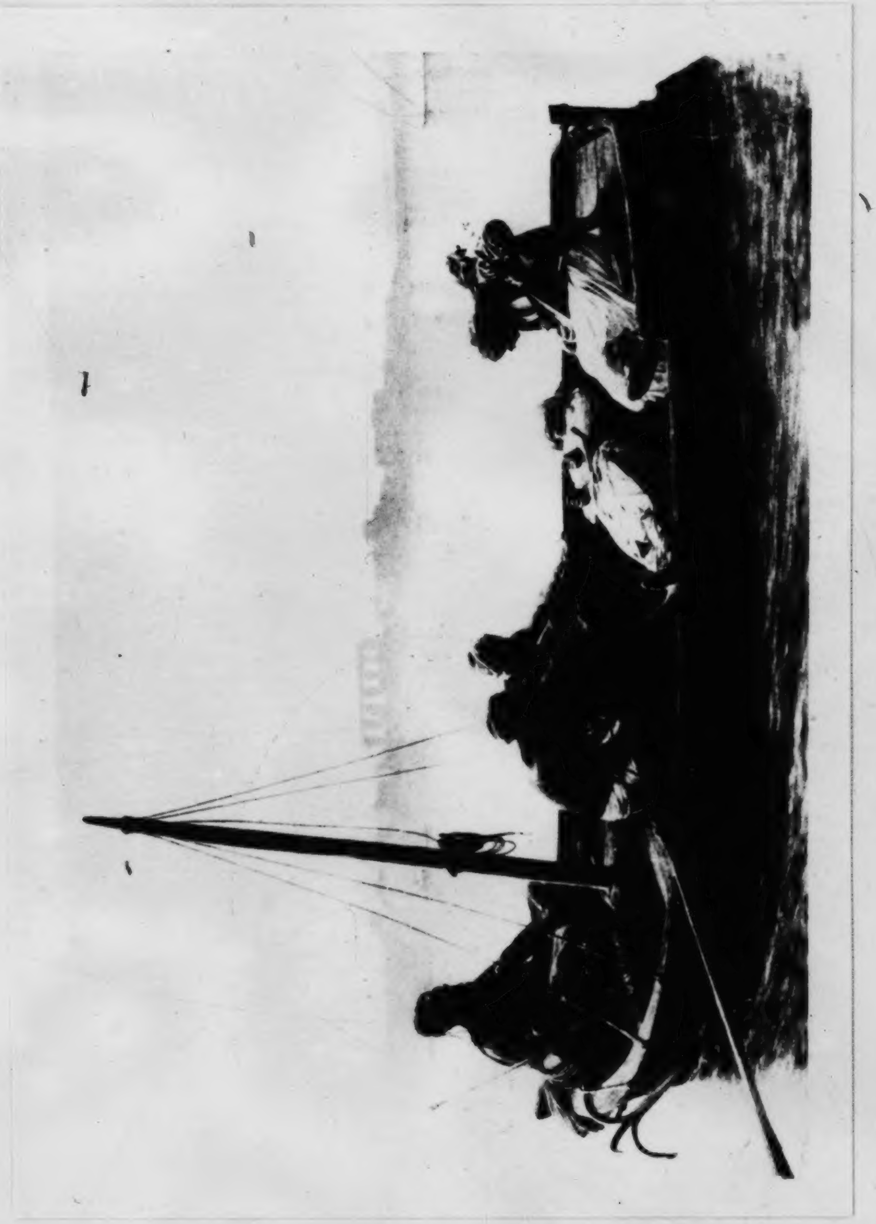


Plate 15.

Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique
The Turkish bath
(1862)

In this wonderland of femininity, a roomful of naked white women abandon themselves to sensual pleasure. One woman plays an instrument, another dances, some eat, others caress each other. The atmosphere is luxurious, with cushions, bath, and in the foreground a tray of unguents depicted. Although nude, many of the women wear jewels.

A sense of total luxury and comfort pervades this painting, mingled with indolence and boredom. The women appear completely passive and the sensuality of the scene is characterized by lassitude. The two relatively active women. the dancer and the musician, elicit no interest from the others; everyone is in her own dream world. Even the two women caressing each other in the right foreground are doing so in a languid, desultory manner. The setting is like an idyllic jewel box in which passive beauty exists outside of time and the world, rendered visible by the voyeurism of the artist and viewer.

Themes: passivity, indolence, sensuality, captivity, the idyll, opulence, voyeurism

Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique
The Turkish Bath (1862)

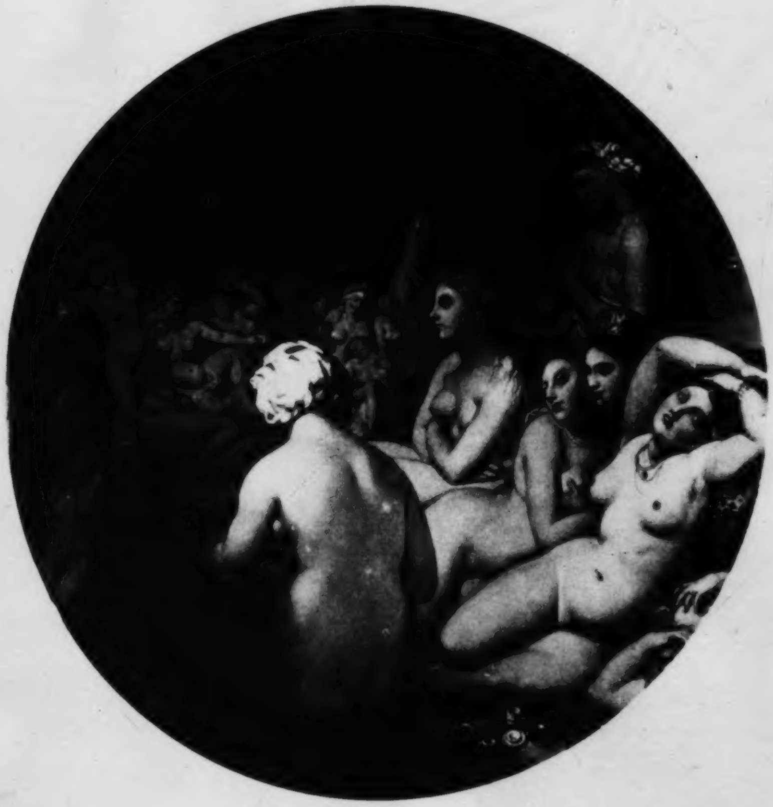


Plate 16.

Fromentin, Eugène
Falconry in Algeria: the quarry (1863)

As black servants sit on the ground attending to falcons, mounted fair-skinned, luxuriously dressed Arabs hold their birds. The scene centers around the falconer to the right, who is riding a fine white thoroughbred and extends his right arm on which a falcon with outstretched wings sits. Behind him rides an older, bearded man on a dark horse. The background is an idyllic green, but not highly detailed, except to the left where spirited-looking horses wait.

Depiction of falconry refers to medievalism and aristocratic pastimes; in this work, the princely, white falconers are juxtaposed against the black servants and positionally are above them. The nobility of the former is accentuated by their rich clothing and their mounts, which are spirited Arabian thoroughbreds. The scene presents Algeria as an idyll, in which aristocratic sport associated with the past is carried out in the present by dignified, noble Arabs in a environment unspoiled by European encroachment.

Themes: the idyll, the past, aristocracy, dignity, natural beauty, noble animals

Fromentin, Eugène
Falconry in Algeria: the quarry (1863)

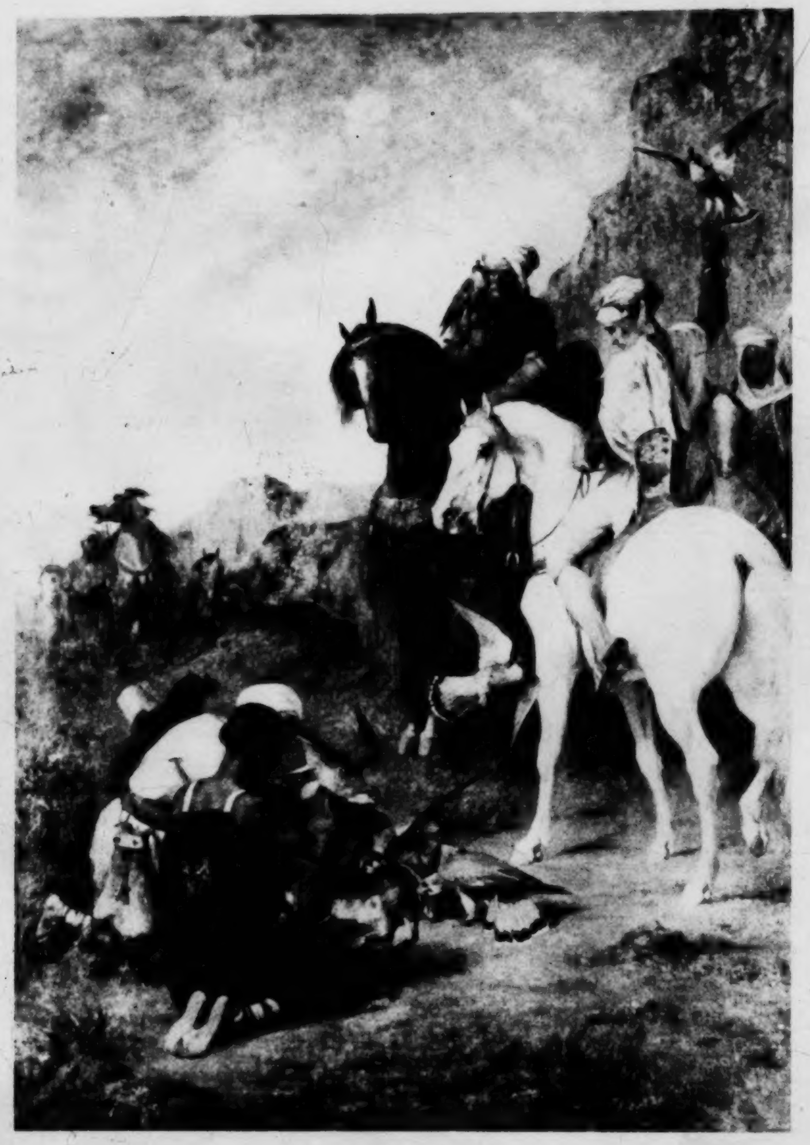


Plate 17.

Regnault, Henri
Summary execution under the Moorish kings of Granada (1870)

This painting depicts a rather gruesome beheading in the Alhambra; the executioner has just struck with his sword and wipes the blade on his pink robe. The victim's severed head has rolled down a blood-spattered step and blood continues to spurt from his neck. The tiled walls of this building's interior are rendered in detail, and both men are painted in an exact, realistic style. The gold embroidery of the victim's costume picks up the gold of the walls, and the bright red of the blood is echoed in the pink of the executioners's robe.

The graphic depiction of violence is intended to shock, as is the nonchalant attitude of the executioner. The brutality of the action contrasts with the opulence of the setting and together these create a sense of the sudden, almost random violence associated with tyranny. The executioner is presented as a physically beautiful male, and his deadliness is accentuated by his utter indifference and the casual way in which he wipes the sword on his robe, as if the matter were of no consequence. His savagery is accentuated by his half-naked state, as he wears only a single cloth wrapped as a robe. The painting focuses on this figure rather than on the victim, and as such becomes a paean to the power of the executioner.

Themes: death, brutality, tyranny, domination, dangerous beauty, opulence, the past

Regnault, Henri
Summary execution under the Moorish kings of Granada (1870)

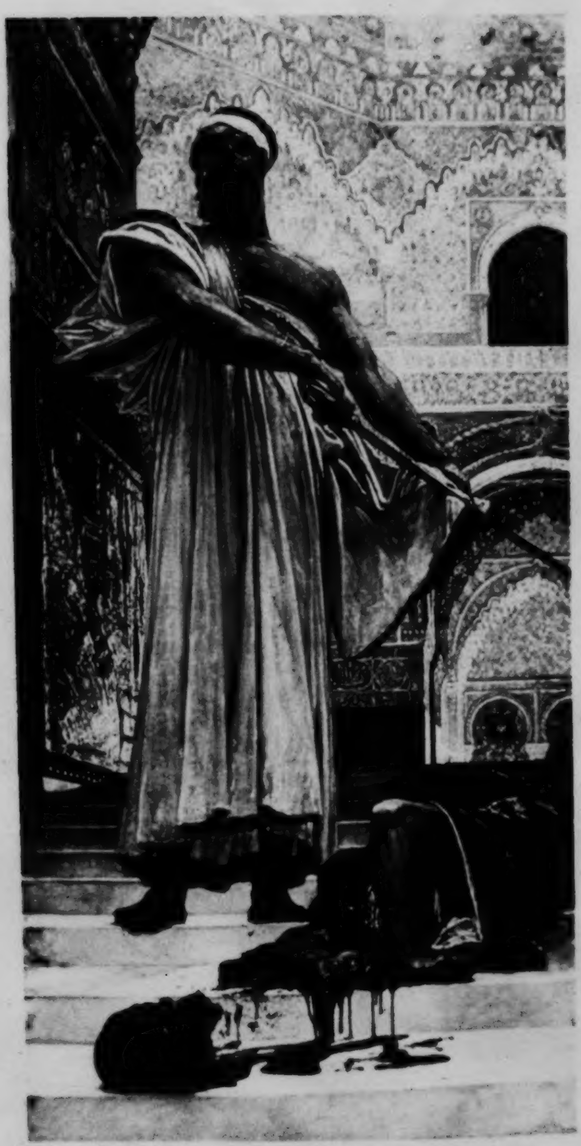


Plate 18.

Gérôme, Jean-Léon
The slave market (1870s)

In this painting a naked white woman is being inspected by a richly dressed Arab, who holds her by the head and checks her teeth. She submits passively to the examination and her owner stands behind her carrying a cloth in one hand and a long stick in the other. The figures in the background express no interest in the scene, and the sexual connotations of her nudity is disregarded by all. The purchase is taking place out of doors in a public square.

This slave is reduced to a pure object in this scene; she is presented frontally to the viewer as a nubile, beautiful woman, yet she arouses no sexual interest in the men examining her. The primary message here is total possession, with sexual possession implicit but secondary in the minds of the Arabs. The sense that human life is worth nothing is expressed by the indifference of the bystanders and in the type of examination, which in the West is associated with the purchase of horses. The viewer is invited to take a prurient and sadistic interest in the barbaric spectacle of a naked woman being sold like horseflesh, who if not submissive could be cowed by the stick held by her master. The color of this slave adds to the sense of barbarism expressed in this scene.

Themes: possession, domination, captivity, passivity, barbarism, inhumanity, sex

Gérôme, Jean-Léon
The slave market (1870s)

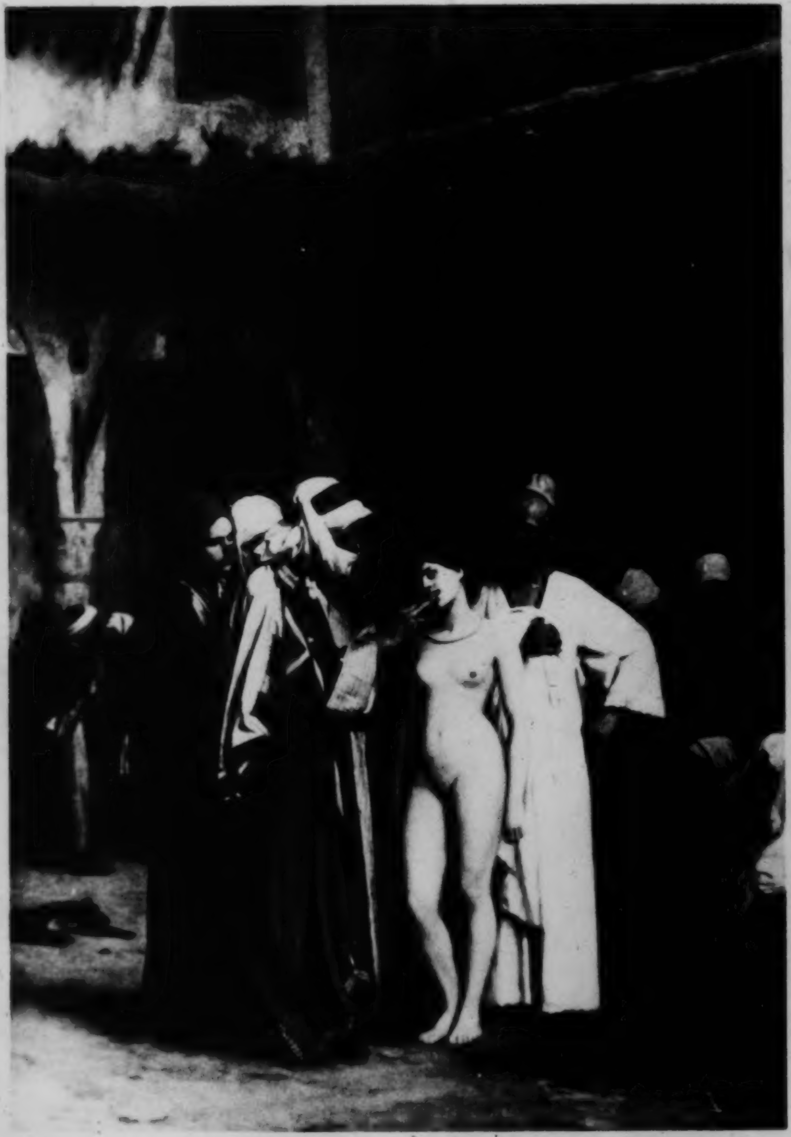


Plate 19.

Clairin, Georges-Jules-Victor
Feeding the flamingo in the harem (1878)

In this luxurious room, a richly dressed white woman offers fruit to a flamingo as a black slave carrying a vessel looks on. The bird dominates the scene by its position above the women, its outstreched wings and elongated neck. It has captivated the interest of the women. In the background, a brocade hanging is detailed; other accoutrements include a fur rug, inlaid table, and vessels.

An exotic atmosphere is created by the opulence of the room and the presence of the flamingo. When compared to a biological flamingo, this bird is impossibly thin and elongated, its delicacy exaggerated. The harem woman also is slim, and the sense is one of two captive beauties living a timeless existence in a gilded cage. The black slave sets off the whiteness of the other woman's skin, and the drabness of her costume contrasts with the richness of the other's and the plumage of the flamingo. The scene is idyllic, with the bird, woman, and furnishings presented as beautiful, charming objects of contemplation.

Themes: indolence, opulence, the idyll, captivity

Clairin, Georges-Jules-Victor
Feeding the flamingo in the harem (1878)

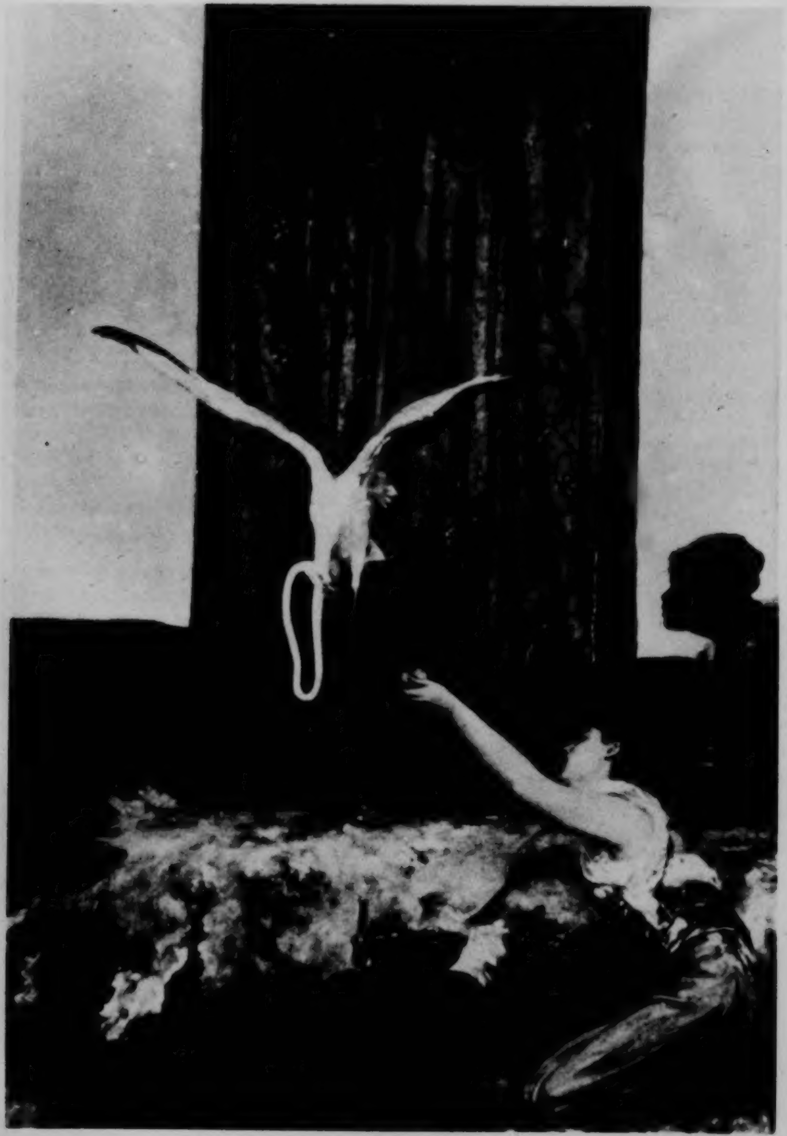


Plate 20.

Benjamin-Constant, Jean Joseph
The favourites of the Emir (1879)

In this fantastic scene, the Emir sits in a cavernous, dark, yet opulent room, his face masked by the shadows, loosely holding two leopards by their leashes. A guard and two slaves are together to one side of the Emir, watching the leopards somewhat apprehensively. The animals stand before the Emir, gazing at him; one has its head on his knee, and the other has approached more closely and has its mouth open, but does not appear to be snarling. The setting includes a tiled fountain and floor and silver incense burner, and one slave carries a large fan while the guard wears an elaborate, antique-looking helmet and carries a shield. The Emir is half-naked, and wears a red cloth around his head and an elaborate red turban.

This painting emphasizes the absolute power wielded by the Emir, who holds savage beasts in check yet shares their dangerous aspects. His pose suggests indolence, satiation, and the sense that no new sensations exist for him. The ultimate solitude of the tyrant is accentuated by his physical separation from the other men and by his apparently effortless ability to control and demand the affection of the leopards which inspire fear in the others. His absolute power is mirrored by his favourites, the leopards, who are themselves dominant carnivores in the wild. The association of the Oriental ruler with dangerous beasts goes back to a verse in Hugo's *Orientales*; in *La douleur du pasha* a ruler pines for his 'Nubian' tiger.

Themes: danger, savagery, opulence, tyranny, decadence, lassitude

Benjamin-Constant, Jean Joseph
The favourites of the Emir (1879)

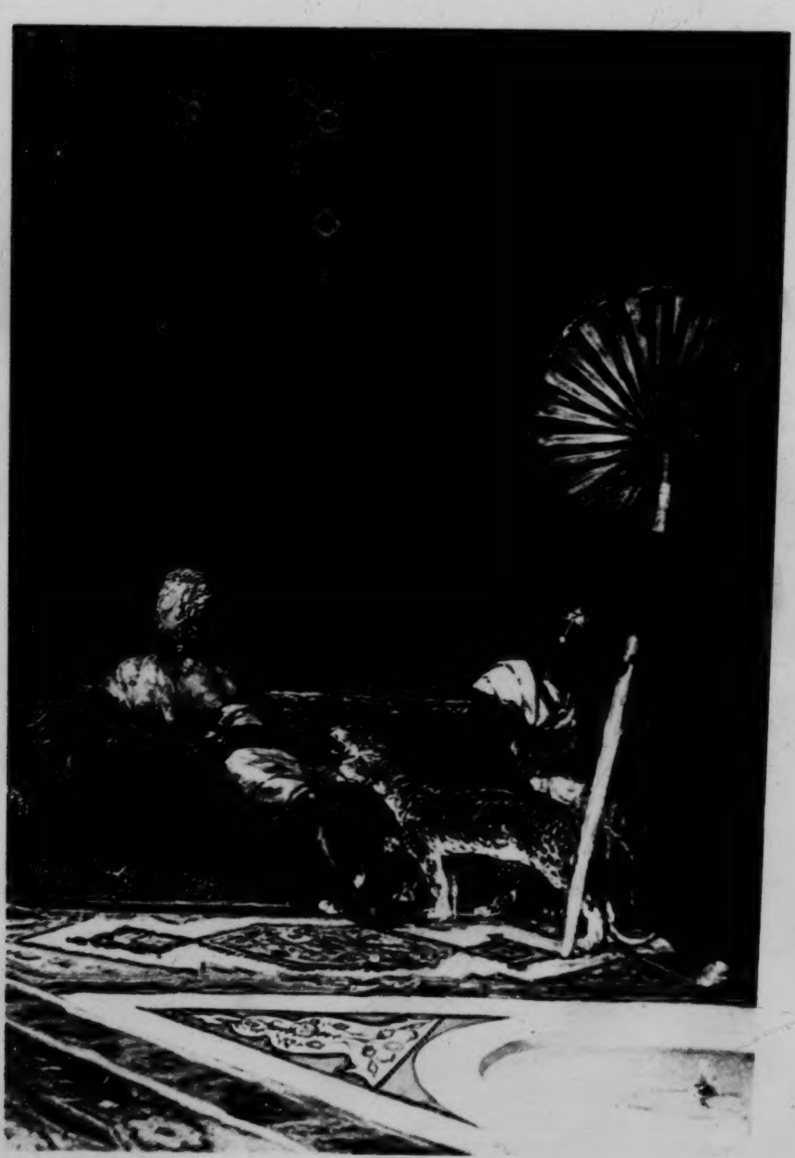


Plate 21.

Benjamin-Constant, Jean Joseph
The sharif's justice (1880s)

In this painting, the terrible aftermath of an act of retribution is presented, and dead, naked women lie scattered in an opulent room in disarray, with tables overturned and hangings pulled from walls. A fountain continues to play in the right foreground. The women to the rear of the painting are barely discernable in the room's darkness, but assorted limbs and body parts can be seen in the half-light. Two women are pictured in the foreground; to the left, a woman lies on her back, legs spread around a piece of overturned furniture. The woman to the right is depicted frontally, with her body standing out but her head in darkness.

This scene verges on necrophilia and evinces a fascination with the ultimate passivity of dead women. The title indicates that the women were killed on the tyrant's orders for some act of disobedience and he remains the unseen presence in the painting. The devastation of the scene and the nudity of the victims point to the total power exercized by his authority. The presentation of the dead nudes, particularly the one to the right in the classic reclining pose, encourages the viewer to see them in a sensual light and to revel in the merciless, ultimate dominance which permits the sharif to do as he likes with these women.

Themes: death, sensuality, tyranny, brutality, power, opulence, passivity

Benjamin-Constant, Jean Joseph
The sharif's justice (1880s)

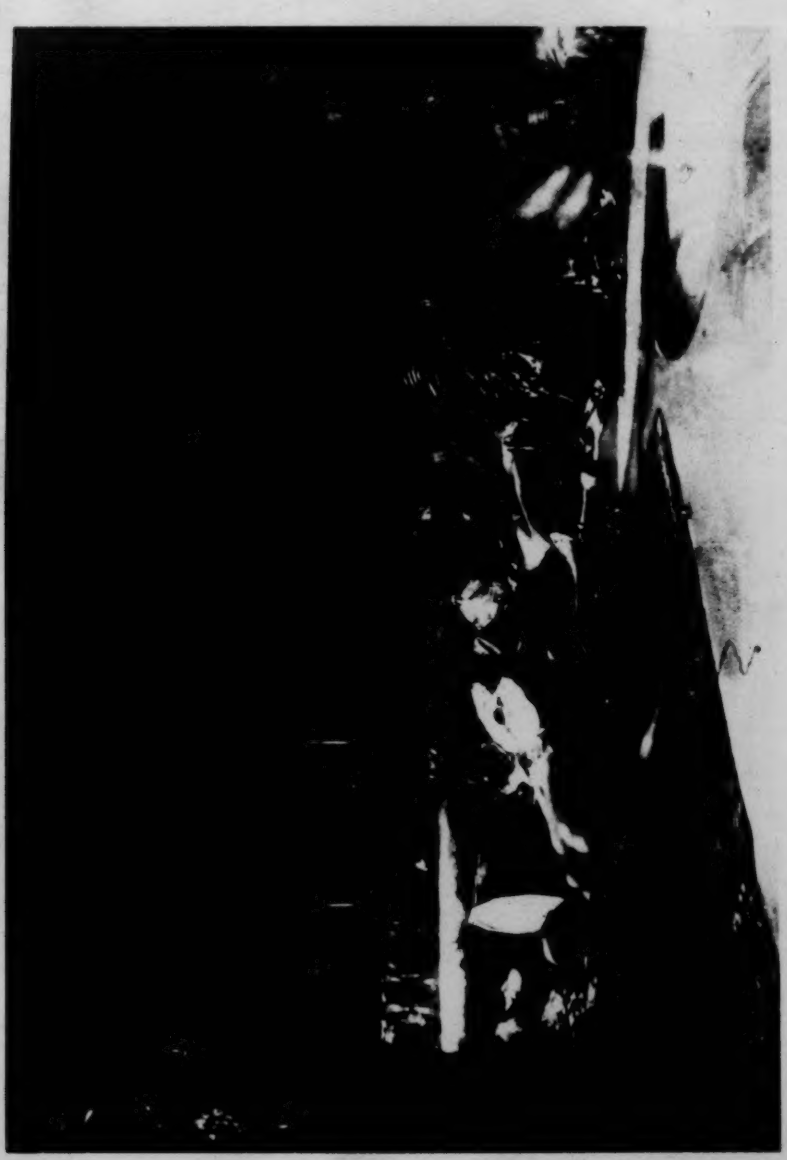


Plate 22.

Gérôme, Jean-Léon
The snake charmer (1880s)

This scene takes place in a large, empty hall, decorated with beautifully tiled yet poorly maintained walls and a bare stone floor. A naked youth handles a python as an emaciated old man plays a flute. The audience consists of ten men huddled on the floor against the wall; most appear to be guards, as they are black and armed with rifles. The central figure in the audience is a bearded, turbanned white man, sitting on furs and wearing a luxurious robe and a long ornamented sword. He watches the boy impassively, but several of the guards smile at the spectacle.

Aside from the obvious sexual connotations of a naked boy fondling a snake, the primary contrast in this painting is between the boy's youth and the age of the flute player and ruler. A secondary contrast exists between the Caucasian features and luxurious costume of the latter and the drabness of the black guards. The detail and opulence of the tiled walls is rendered hollow by the bareness of the room and the fact that some of the tiles have broken off; the past is evoked by the antique armour and gun hanging there. The sense created by this painting is of an Orient past its prime, created both by the physical setting and by the jaded demeanor of the ruler, who looks as if he has seen it all before. It also hints a sexual pleasures of a decadent sort, evoked both by the depiction of a dangerous, 'evil' reptile and by its association with the perfect body of the youth, who becomes a spectacle for the elderly ruler and his retinue.

Themes: sensuality, decadence, danger, spectacle, the past, tyranny

Gérôme, Jean-Léon
The snake charmer (1880s)

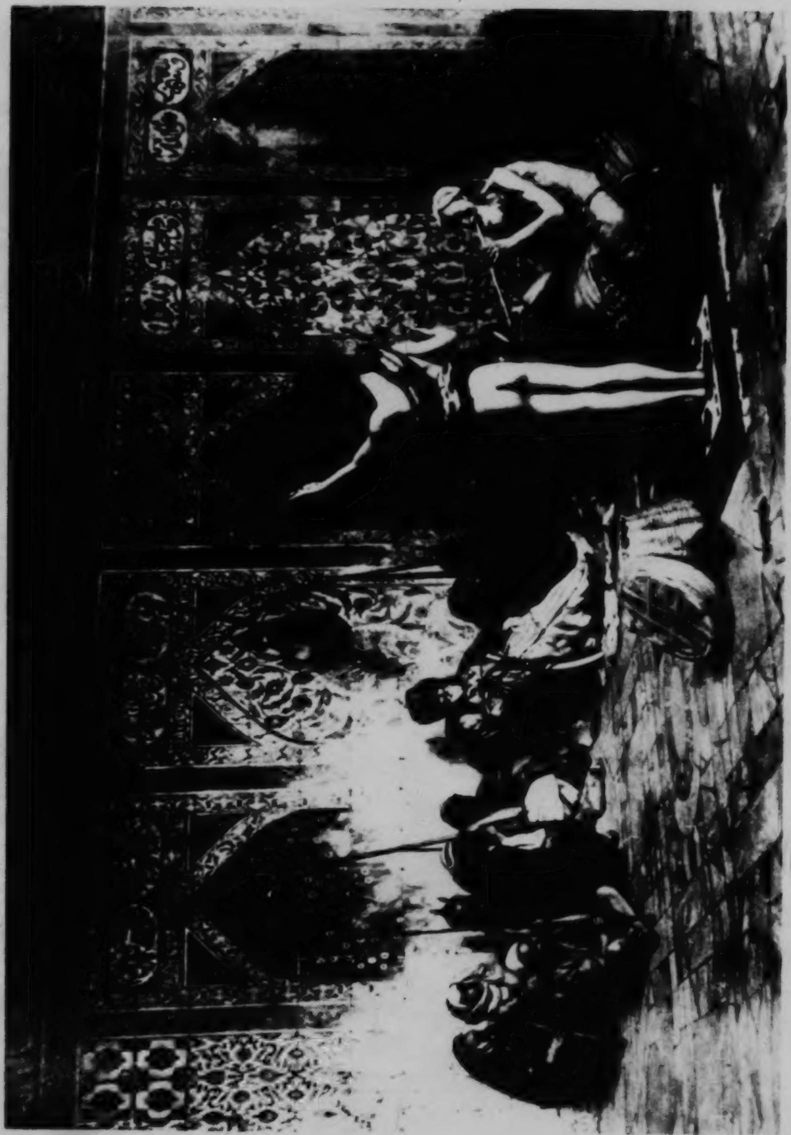


Plate 23.

Du Noüy, Jean-Jules-Antoine Lecomte
The white slave (1888)

This auburn-haired slave girl sits in a luxurious harem as two black slaves wash clothes in a marble pool to her right. The white slave is smoking, and half-eaten food is laid out in rich dishes before her. She wears a jewelled ornament in her hair and several rings, including a huge diamond on her left hand. She gazes off into space, lost in thought.

As in many other harem scenes, the white nude is juxtaposed against black servants; their labour also contrasts to her indolence. In such works, sexuality is restricted to white women. The mood suggested by her expression is contented luxury, although boredom is hinted at by the half-eaten food. She is presented as a pampered, jewel-like object existing in a sensual paradise created and controlled by man. The opulence of the room and her jewels point to a master who provides the luxury, and the title informs the viewer that she is a captive, sexual slave.

Themes: indolence, sensuality, the idyll, opulence, captivity, tyranny

Du Noüy, Jean-Jules-Antoine Lecomte
The white slave (1888)

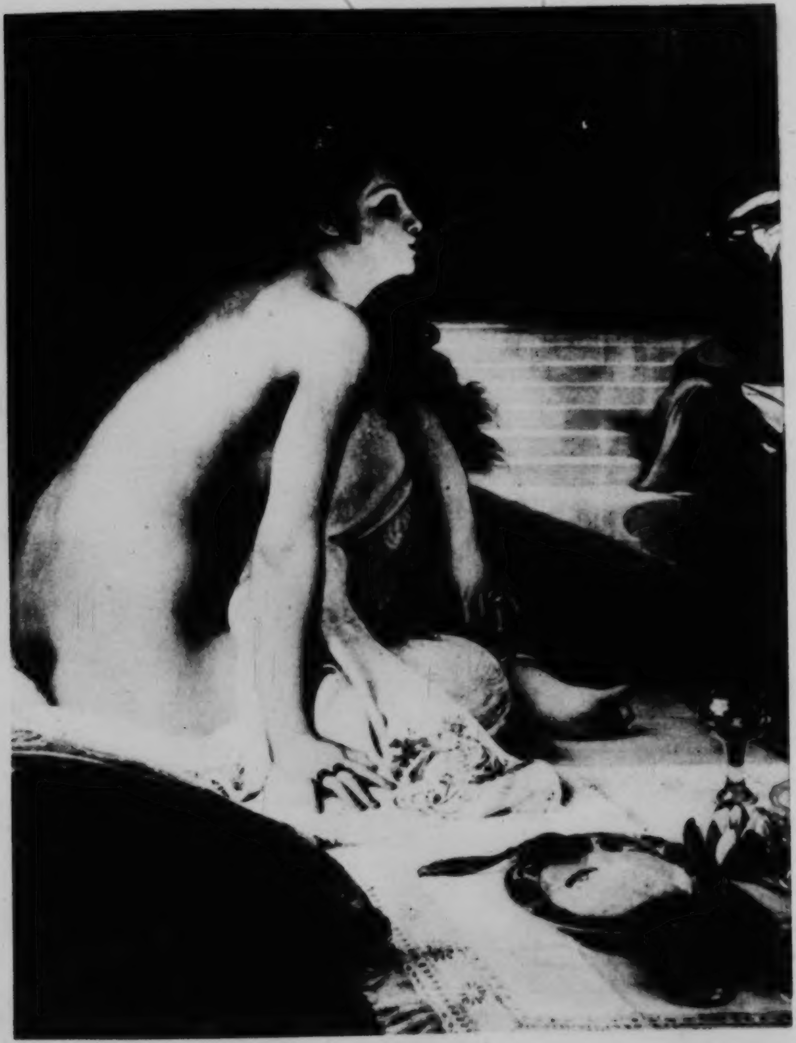


Plate 24.

Bouchard, Paul-Léon
Harem execution (1880s)

A scene of execution is about to take place in a luxurious harem; five black men approach a group of terrified women from the right, and a sixth has been discovered behind a curtain in the centre of the room. The latter holds a sword and the other men are armed with garrots. The victims are white, and the woman at the centre has long, blond hair; those whose chests can be seen are barebreasted. Musical instruments lie in the foreground.

This painting is an extreme example of the association of brutal violence with sensuality. The blacks are presented as bestial thugs, and two smile as they move towards the women. The captivity of the women is accentuated by their total inability to escape and the utter terror on their faces. They are white, beautiful, and their sexual attractiveness is heightened by their bare breasts and erect nipples. A tyrannical ruler issuing orders is implied by the opulence of the room as well as by the group of blacks carrying out the executions. The innocence of the women is suggested by the musical instruments at the foreground; one imagines the victims unsuspectingly dancing and singing as the executioners surround their chamber.

Themes: death, savagery, tyranny, cruelty, sensuality, captivity, passivity, opulence

Bouchard, Paul-Léon
Harem execution (1880s)

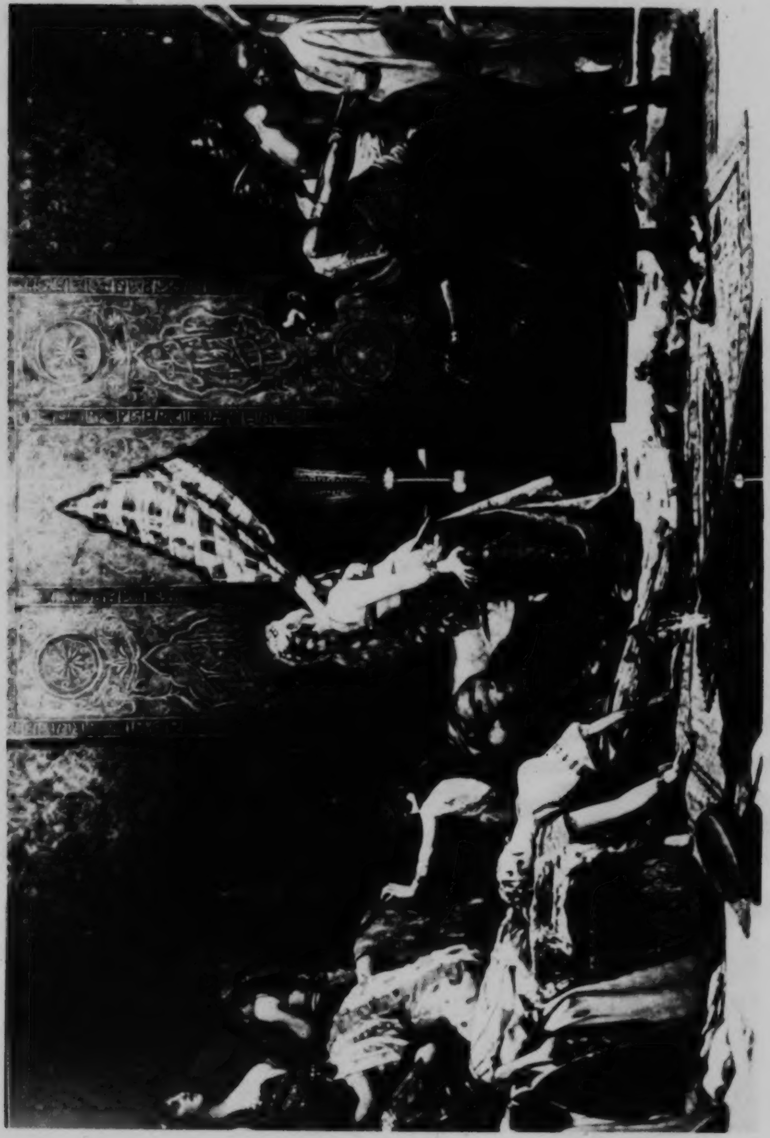


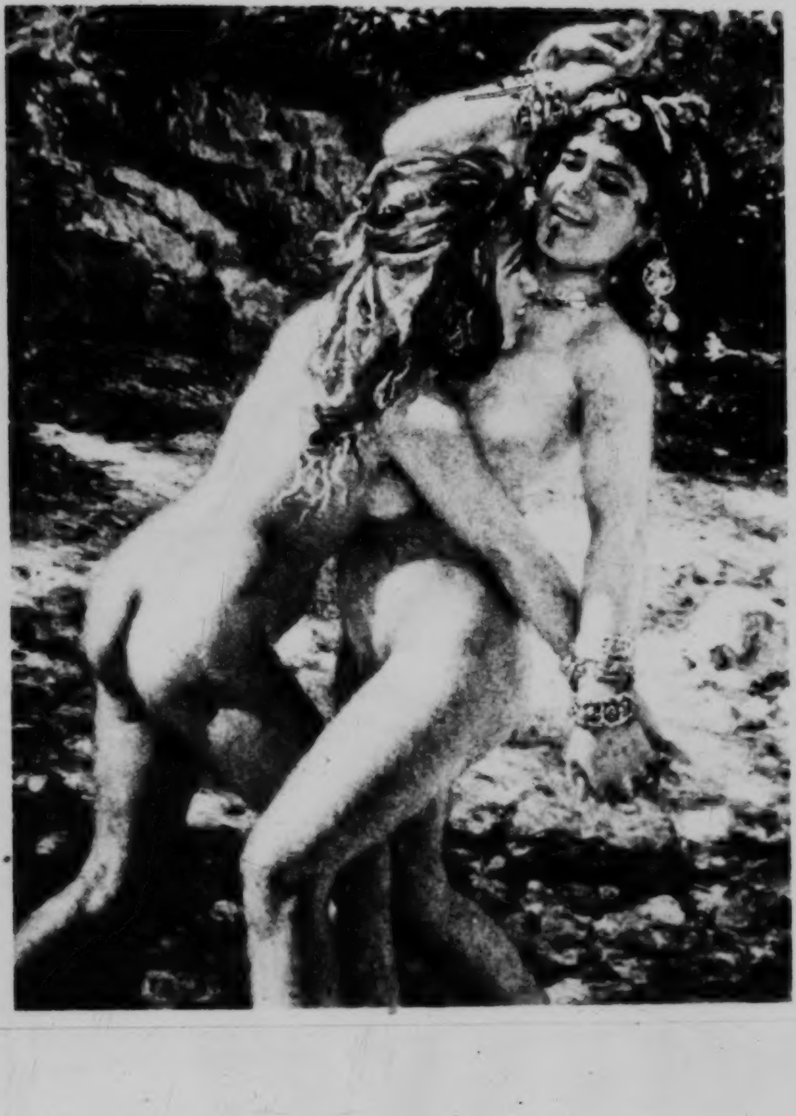
Plate 25. Dinet, Alphonse-Etienne
Young women amuse themselves by fighting (1890s)

Two tatooed Berber girls wrestle in the sunlight; both are nude, but wear heavy jewellry and headdresses. The wrestling is all in good fun, as evidenced by the smile on the face of the young woman to the left. The background is not detailed, but a pastoral scene is suggested by the indistinct trees and hills painted in shades of green.

This painting presents Algeria as a happy colony inhabited by fun-loving, healthy people. The headdresses, tatoos, and jewellry make the women's ethnic origin unmistakable, and their nude, well-developed bodies add a sensual element to the scene. The setting is idyllic, and placing the scene out of doors suggests an open, uninhibited society in which noble savages play freely. Voyeuristic elements are less explicit here than in many harem paintings, but the French viewer nevertheless can see in these women charming objects of contemplation.

Themes: the idyll, sensuality, spectacle, nobility

Dinet, Alphonse-Etienne
Young women amuse themselves by fighting (1890s)



While many of the works discussed above are aesthetically pleasing and well-executed in a strictly artistic sense, the images produced of the Muslim world tend to emphasize themes relating to violence, sex, the idyll, and religion. The treatment of these themes accentuated the status of the Orient as bizarre spectacle, existing to horrify or delight the European viewer, and the quality of timelessness and the presentation of the East as a static, decadent entity past its prime, helped to create an Orient undifferentiated by place, time, and ethnic composition.

The most prevalent themes in these paintings refer to notions of tyranny, captivity, sensuality, and barbarism. Opulence and luxury also were emphasized, as was death, cruelty, indolence, and a view of Islam as a fanatical religion. Lesser themes include melancholy, animals, and reference to the noble savage. French possession and domination is apparent in many of these works, both in terms of explicit depiction of French victories, and in the voyeurism implicit in scenes of forbidden, intimate aspects of Muslim life. This is illustrated below:

Tyranny, domination and fanaticism:
Plates 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

Death, barbarism, and cruelty:
Plates 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 14, 17, 18, 21, 24.

Sensuality, indolence, and melancholy:
Plates 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

Captivity, submission, and passivity:
Plates 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 19, 21, 22, 24.

Luxury and opulence:
Plates 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24.

Decadence and the past:
Plates 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 20, 22.

French heroism and the noble savage:
Plates 1, 2, 9, 11, 16, 25.

Noble animals:
Plates 4, 7, 11, 13, 16, 20.

In the following chapter these themes are analyzed and related to colonialist ideologies being promoted in France. The way in which aesthetic treatment of these themes reinforced the ideological meanings produced in the works, that is, the process whereby notions of the East were symbolized in artistic codes and conventions, is evaluated.

VII. Analysis of Orientalism

At the most general level, Orientalist paintings produced ideological meanings which were manifested in concrete colonial and social relations and processes. These meanings were produced in the colonizing nation about a colonized people, and the assymetry of this power relationship is inscribed both in the meanings themselves and the way in which they were produced. At the same time, the images defining Muslims also defined 'the French' and helped to create the 'Frenchman' by creating the Oriental and vice versa.

This chapter addresses the causal relationship obtaining between images and themes found in Orientalist painting and colonial and national ideologies extant in France in the nineteenth century. To this end, the themes present in Orientalism are discussed and related to colonialist ideologies. Attention is directed to the constitution of individual subjectivity by such paintings in terms of their role in inculcating nationalistic sentiments, and in naturalizing the colonial relationship. The mediation of ideologies through specific aesthetic conventions and codes is considered and the thematic contradictions apparent in some paintings is evaluated. In conclusion, the process by which ideologies 'work' is discussed.

A. Themes of Orientalist Painting

The principal themes which may be identified in Orientalism tend to cluster into four broad categories: violence, sex, the idyll, and religion, all of which were permeated by exoticism. Violence and sex are the most important of these and frequently intersect in works combining eroticism with brutality. Religion and the idyll also are often found in association with violence and sex, and each of the four categories shares certain thematic elements with one or more of the others. These categories should be seen as fluid entities which combine and recombine the specific themes recurring in Orientalist painting; these include ferocity, cruelty, death and tyranny; forbidden places such as harems, baths, and mosques; the sense of the Orient as decayed, jaded, and past its prime; fanaticism, war, and splendour; melancholy, natural beauty, and mysticism; and animals, deserts, and treasure.

Exoticism

While violence, sex, religion, and idyllic scenes typically characterize nineteenth-century Salon painting as a whole, in Orientalism a special treatment is apparent which sets these works apart from other genres of painting. This in part had to do with certain subjects peculiar to Orientalism, such as the harem, but also relates to the exoticism that pervades the genre and causes the most mundane scenes to appear strange or spectacular. This infusion of exoticism works on the subject matter in such a way that it becomes possible to speak of an exotic cruelty or an exotic melancholy, and so on. As noted elsewhere, exoticism tends deliberately to accentuate differences of an alien culture (Forster 1982:21) and, in the case of Orientalism, exoticism was a primary element determining presentation of thematic material in these scenes of the Islamic world. Thus one reads of "opulent exoticism" heightening the pleasure induced by the "combination of savagery and sensuality" characterizing the genre (Harding 1979:72) and of the specifically "exotic violence and cruelty" found in so many Orientalist works (Mickalak in press:1). The point is not that violence and sex and so forth appear only in Orientalism, but that they were treated in such a way that they appear to exist in a sense specific to the Orient and hence very differently from their counterparts in works dealing with European subject matter.

Violence and Sex

Most writers point to the unusually high level of violence as a prime thematic characteristic of Orientalism (Jullian 1977; Harding 1979; Michalak in press). This was present in the early works of Gros and Girodet, in which the sweeping action typical of battle scenes was made even more frenzied by emphasis on "the fanatical courage of the Eastern warrior" (Brown University 1982:55), and interest in barbaric weaponry, naked black fighters, and exotic costuming. The ferocity of the Arab was expressed in a tendency for these battle paintings to depict severed heads, as in the several versions of *Revolt in Cairo* executed by various artists, paintings of the Algerian conquest, such as those by Raffet, and in *Aboukir* (Brown University 1982:61,80). While some battle paintings, such as Vernet's *Capture of the smala*. tended to emphasize French heroism and nationalistic pride rather than focusing on the instinctive ferocity of the Muslim, these works nevertheless directed attention to the exotic nature of the enemy (Boime 1980:43). It is interesting to note that Gautier criticized *Smala* for not exhibiting the Oriental savagery expected of such works. He wrote:

> We would like it to have been dripping with gold and precious stones, with costumes of shining velvet, strange, barbarous weapons, maddened chargers steaming with sweat, their pupils and nostils full of fire...naked Negroes fighting tooth and nail (1845 in Snell 1982:172).

Chassériau's battle pieces also express an interest in the "romantic barbarism" of Arab fighters (Brown University 1982:70) and his scenes of conflict between mounted warriors combine violence with exotic trappings in a manner inspired by Delacroix. Animals also partook of violence, and some works depicted various ferocious beasts devouring Orientals, as in the highly praised Salon work of 1850 by Matout which had a lion eating an Algerian girl (Jullian 1977:104).

The association of sex and violence in Orientalist painting occurs so frequently that a distinction between the two categories is arbitrary. Jullian notes:

> From Delacroix through Makart to Rochgrosse, the East was a pretext for associating violence with sensuality, death with nudity. Most of the Orientalists sought to evoke pictures of easy pleasures and passive beauties, the slaves (1977:96).

As noted above, Delacroix's *Sardanapalus* was extremely influential by virtue of its treatment of violence in association with sensuality, despotism, and melancholy. The beauty inherent in absolute power was expressed by Baudelaire, who remarked that "Sardanapalus himself was beautiful as a woman" (1965 [1855]:140). Delacroix's depiction of the Oriental tyrant having his horses and concubines killed, and his sense of a "joy of destruction and a fevered sensuality" (Eitner 1964:7), came to characterize much Orientalist work such as *The sharif's justice*, *Harem execution*, and numerous imitations of these.

Violence also was evoked through reference to the barbaric cruelty of palace revolts and uprisings; *Revolt in Cairo* expresses this, although it emphasizes the battle, and this also is apparent in works such as Rochgrosse's *Last days of Babylon* (n.d.). Regnault, painter of *Summary execution*, describing a painting of this type, notes approvingly:

> A severed head is nailed to the boat like a trophy; but the heads of the obscure warriors have been cut off and nailed to the walls and gates of the captured city. The women will be half-naked, they have been struggling: the master's eye has to be drawn by the glint of white, young flesh... (in Jullian 1977:87)

All of these works evince an erotic pleasure in the tyrant's ability to dispense life and death at will; the association of power and sensuality also finds expression in the interest taken in slavery. Jullian notes:

> The presence of slavery was an important aspect of paintings that carried the flirtation with an alien culture to the point of violent and erotic fantasies (ibid.:92)

While slavery also represented luxury and an idyllic indolence, elements of domination and eroticism are central to the many paintings of harems and slave markets; many of these exhibit "overtones of rape, brutality, and sensuality" (Fine Art Society 1978:63). Gérôme has a tendency in his numerous paintings of slave markets to idealize the submissiveness of the female merchandise (Boime 1983:67). While the term 'slave' when applied to a female could refer either to the white odalisque or the black servant, male slaves generally were black, frequently nude, and also depicted as victims of the tyrant, as in *The bearer of bad tidings*. Jullian points out that through *Sardanapalus* and the works of Gros and Girodet, blacks came to symbolize death (1977:86).

As noted above, Chassériau's portrait of the Caliph of Constantine set a standard for male beauty; the combination of danger and melancholy expressed in *Sardanapalus* also is present in this work and others of Algerian chieftains. Gautier wrote of *The Caliph*:

> These are indeed those sweet and terrible, mournful

> and flashing eyes which seem to turn inward and yet which pierce you through and through, those gazelle and lion eyes, which cause so many Parisian women to shiver and blush in their seats (1845 in Michalak in press:10)

The voluptuous beauty expressed in scenes referred to above emphasizing absolute power and the cruelty of the tyrant also is evident in paintings of evil and destructive women. While women usually were depicted as victims of male cruelty, the eroticism of some was enhanced by the element of danger; Regnault wrote that his *Salomé* (1869) represented "a dark panther of caressing ferocity" (in Stranahan 1889:321). Many other works hint at harem intrigue and erotic power, such as Bernard's *Lettres persanes* (1887) or Isabey's *Queen of Sheba* (1869) which combines female danger with fabulous wealth and numerous black slaves (Reff 1974:128).

Death also could be seen as an erotic experience for the victim; the women in *Sardanapalus* "are thrust into the most voluptuous and provocative poses" (Bade 1979:10) and Gautier suggests this association in his response to Clésinger's sculpture *Cleopatra* (1861):

> The venomous beast has bitten the beautiful breast which has been offered to it, and the first shudder of the poison passes through the queen's charming body like a spasm of pleasure (in Snell 1982:116).

The Idyll

While the depiction of submissive harem beauties by definition contains elements of domination and implicit violence, most of the hundreds of scenes exhibited at the Salons presented the harem as an idyllic place of sexual seduction and Oriental indolence. The term 'odalisque', which originally meant a slave to the Sultan's wives (from the Turkish *oda*, for room), came in the West to be associated with

> l'image de la femme soumise et radieuse qui hante l'imagination comme presque tous les termes inhérents du harem (d'Huart and Tazi 1980:194)

Emphasis on the sensual lassitude of the harem is apparent in works by Delacroix and Ingres, despite their stylistic differences. Gautier's reviews of the latter's many odalisques refer to the beautiful indolence of the women and express an idealization of the captive who "is to be savoured as if by privileged voyeurs or by invisible intruders" (Snell 1982:107).

In these scenes of harems and Turkish baths, white nudes frequently are juxtaposed against black slaves (Jullian 1977:94). This refers in part to an interest in white or 'Circassian' slave girls, whose captivity traditionally had aroused the horror of Europeans, but also reflects the relative inaccessibility of genuine harems (as opposed to brothels) to artists and the necessity for the latter to rely on imagination (Michalak in press:6). The white odalisque/black slave juxtaposition continued throughout the century, as in the case of Gérôme, who executed numerous works of this type and considered this typically Oriental sensuality as one aspect of the "primitive utopia" found in the East (Boime 1983:67).

Conventional treatment of harems emphasized the setting and props such as hookahs, tiled baths, and still lives were typical, although some artists added birds, such as Clairin's peacocks (Jullian 1979:98). Boime suggests that the interest in "exotic settings and erotic suggestions" of harems painted by Ingres, Delacroix, Gleyre, and others rather incongruously refered to the "freedom" thought to be incarnate in a primitive golden age (1980:149). Gazelles and other exotic animals also added to the idyllic scene evoked by the harem, as was apparent in much of Chassériau's work.

The sense of the idyll was expressed in landscapes as well, although some preferred to paint the starkness of the desert. Fromentin's success in his treatment of the Algerian landscape as a "living Bible" (in Michalak in press:15) peopled by shepherds and noble horsemen proved influential for other painters. His work was highly praised; Baudelaire wrote:

> He is neither precisely a landscape painter nor a genre painter; these two categories are too restricted to contain his free and supple fancy. If I said of him that he is a teller of traveller's tales, I should not be saying enough, for there are travellers with neither poetry not soul, and his soul is one of the rarest and most poetic that I know. But light and heat, which cast a kind of tropical madness into certain brains, shaking them with an unappeasable frenzy and driving them to unknown dances, only pour the sweetness and repose of contemplation into his soul. It is ecstasy rather than fanaticism. (1965 [1851]:184).

The thoroughbred was very much a part of the idyllic Orient, and Arab horses were painted by many painters from

Gros and Géricault to Delacroix, Chassériau, and as noted, Fromentin, as well as by lesser artists (Jullian 1977:104). Fromentin's interest in falconry in Algeria also was expressed by painters such as Decamps and, later, Renoir; this tendency for falconry to occur in Orientalism refers to medievalism and the belief that this aristocratic sport originated in North Africa (Boime 1980:109).

Arabs in their natural habitat, whether engaged in falconry or only watering their horses, became a symbol for the "incorruptible dignity" of the noble savage (Jullian 1977:102) and this becomes apparent in works idealizing exotic poverty. In this sense, a critical review of Leleux's *Password* (1849), a work depicting events of 1848 in Paris, is revealing:

> What is more, in our filthy mud, poverty is disgusting and rags are horrible! Since M. Leleux likes rages and tatters, I advise him to keep to those of Spain and the Orient; there at least a splendid sun stains them crimson and gilds poverty with gold (Lagenvais 1849 in Clark 1973:29)

Religion

The treatment of Islam by Orientalist painters emphasized both violent and idyllic elements. On the one hand, an interest was evinced in strange ceremonies, dervishes, and "the spectacle of Arab religious frenzy" as apparent in Delacroix's celebrated *Fanatics of Tangiers* (Rosenblum 1969). The *Ceremony of the Dosseh* by Bida also emphasized the fanatical nature of Islam, and the depiction of horses walking over the bodies of the faithful to "prove the power of Muhammed" fascinated Salon visitors and painters alike (Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978:365). Many other works referred to Muslim fanaticism, including Belly's *Religious festival in Cairo* (1869), Decamps' painting of an excited crown observing *The punishment of the hooks*, and Leleux's *Dance of the Djinns* (n.d.). Gérôme's *Door of the mosque* associated the religious building with the severed heads of thirty executed beys, watched over by an indifferent guard (Stranahan 1889:331).

Islam also could evoke a serene, idyllic past by virtue of the fairy-like architecture of mosques and minarets. Depiction of religious architecture in Orientalist works was common and provided the appropriate picturesque and exotic setting for scenes of religious devotion (Jullian 1977:106). Mosque interiors were a favorite subject and Michalak notes that, as with harems and Turkish baths, these interiors traditionally were forbidden places closed to Europeans (in press:6). Gérôme painted several works of this type, as well as scenes occurring on mosque rooftops or on minarets, including the well-received *Mussulmans at prayer in Cairo* (1865) and *Call to prayer (the muezzin)* (n.d.); Boime speaks of the latter painting as expressing "the old western fantasy of an exotic, devout, almost pastoral way of life" (1983:71). This relates to the association of the Orient with biblical antiquity and the belief that the quality of life found in the East represented a timeless, mystical simplicity. Gautier referred to the "Biblical" characters found in Algeria (in Jullian 1977:130) and in 1864 Thoré-Bürger advised artists:

> Instead of inventing from scratch in a Parisian studio a scene with Rachel at the fountain or the good Samaritan chatting with Jesus, go and paint out there in the desert some fountain in the middle of an oasis with Arab girls coming to draw water (in Harding 1979:77).

The themes identified above were present in highly acclaimed Salon works by artists of note as well as in innumerable paintings by lesser artists, and themes became conventionalized over time as the genre increased in popularity and the association of the Orient with a specific type of violence, sensuality, religious experience and idyll became firmly entrenched in the aesthetic of French painters.

Themes and Colonialist Ideology

Themes were repeated throughout the century despite a shift in treatment of subject matter from battle pieces in the earlier part to greater emphasis on gratuitous violence and anecdotal scenes in the second half. The recurring images in these works presented the Orient as at once barbaric, uncivilized, tyrannical, sensual, a spectacle, decadent, noble, static, fanatical, and as a place where European fantasies could be lived out. At first glance some of these themes appear contradictory, both internally in given paintings and in relation to each other. For example, an internally contradictory theme can be found in the presentation of the slave market, the treatment of which underlined Muslim inhumanity yet presents it in such a way that the viewer may vicariously identify with the power relationship inherent in such inhumane practices. Externally contradictory themes can be found in the image of Algeria and other Oriental countries as both violent and idyllic, savage and noble. Both external and internal thematic contradictions are discussed below, but the point to be made here is that these themes, despite apparent incongruities such as the idealization of the tyrant, shared essential elements with colonialist ideologies being promulgated in France at the same time the paintings were produced:

1. Both accentuated and elaborated differences between France and the Muslim world by emphasizing those Islamic traits which were believed to exist in opposition to qualities characterizing the French.

Barbarism versus civilization, tyranny versus good government, fanaticism versus rationality and so on were assumptions running through the official justification for colonial expansion as well as the artpieces. Paintings such as *Battle of Aboukir* and *Revolt in Cairo* visually contrast Arab fanaticism, ferocity, and the effeteness of its ruling elite with the civilized vigour of French officers. *The punishment of the hooks* and *Ceremony of the Dosseh* presents Oriental barbarity and fanaticism in such a way that the peculiarity and horror of these scenes are accentuated and by implication contrasts to French justice and Christianity.

The decadence of Muslim society is expressed in such works as *The snake charmer*, and in those juxtaposing contemporary scenes with ancient ruins, such as *Egyptian modesty* and *The prisoner*; the Orient is presented as past its prime, requiring European assistance to emerge from the Middle Ages. The idyllic harem scenes also point to a timeless, sensual way of life impossible in contemporary France; the captive white slaves may have titillated the imagination of Frenchmen but did so in part because they represented a different kind of sensuality and role for women than that found in 'civilized' Europe.

2.Both drew on traditional views of Muslims which were then adapted to the new concrete relationship obtaining between the two areas.

The belief in Muslim falsity, tyranny, lasciviousness, and cruelty initially was established during the Crusades and existed virtually unchanged throughout the colonial period. Despite the rise of exoticism and tendency of some aesthetic works to treat aspects of these traits as picturesque or perversely thrilling, belief in their essential veracity continued and transformed into a call for political domination as a means of civilizing the Muslim. The severed heads in *Aboukir* and *Revolt in Cairo* refer to the savagery and fanatical hatred for Christianity traditionally believed to typify Muslims, which during the colonial period was used as a justification for repressive measures. Many paintings of Islamic cruelty or religious fanaticism carry suggestions of institutionalized sanctions, thus referring to notions of tyrannical Islamic governments; *Punishment of the hooks*, *Fanatics of Tangiers* as well as pieces where the tyrannical ruler is implicit in the nature of the subject, such as *The sharif's justice* and *Harem execution*, are examples of this. The cruelty and violence believed to characterize the Muslim polity are apparent in *The prisoner* and *Summary execution*; these works also refer to assumptions of the frozen, static nature of the Orient, which underlay the view that change could only be brought about by Europe establishing a 'good', progressive government in the area. Traditional notions of Islamic lasciviousness and sexual freedom permitted by the captivity of women are apparent in harem paintings as well as in scenes of slave markets where the nubile young women obviously were being sold for sexual purposes. Scenes such as *The slave market* and *Egyptian modesty* carried connotations of power and domination also believed to typify the Muslim social order.

3. Both were relatively coherent in regard to the presentation of the French/Muslim relationship.

The Orient was something to be possessed. Colonial ideology legitimized this possession by emphasizing the civilizing mission, Muslim mismanagement, historical possession, and the benefits of new markets. Aesthetic works saw possession in terms of the ability of the Orient to provide a spectacle and a place where the Frenchman could live out fantasies unattainable at home. Emphasis on French possession is evident in works such as *The capture of Abd-el-kader's smala*, as well as in voyeuristic harem scenes such as *Interior of a Constantine harem* and other works depicting places traditionally forbidden to Europeans. Notions of possession sometimes could be contradictory; on the one hand, it was a precondition for raising the Muslim to civilization, but on the other, it meant the loss of the picturesque charm that made it a living theatre. The Orient as spectacle is apparent in works accentuating exotic or bizarre scenes; *Fanatics of Tangier*, *The slave market*, and *The snake charmer* all point to a visual appropriation of the alien for the titillation of the French sensibility.

These two sets of ideologies - colonialist and aesthetic - drew upon and reinforced each other's claim to truth. Both articulated with and incorporated other sets of ideologies, specifically those addressing questions of nationalism, warfare, women, race, and religion; Orientalist painting, then, may be seen as part of a great ensemble of ideologies existing in regard to the French view of themselves in the world. In this sense, Orientalism also produced meanings about 'the French' through its depictions of Islamic life.

B. Ideologies of Race and Nationalism

Orientalist painting 'worked' as ideology not because the viewer was injected with propagandistic images of the East, but because she/he recognized her/himself as the subject to whom the ideologies of nationalism and colonialism were addressed. Through this recognition, the viewer, as subject, actively intervened in the process whereby meaning was constructed from the images and ideas present in the paintings. Although in certain instances these ideologies took on explicitly propagandistic forms, and their production and content was structurally allied with the dominant classes and State, the ideological efficacity of Orientalism lay in its ability to provoke this spontaneous, unconscious (mis) recognition in individuals. In this sense, ideology does not require a conscious, cynical infusion of propagandistic ideas by a manipulative ruling class; the latter also is constituted by ideology, and in any hierarchical society the hegemony exercized by the dominant factions has enough momentum to ensure that their ideas are reproduced in ideology without recourse to a plot. While Orientalist paintings created meanings that helped to reproduce relations of production and colonialism, it nevertheless existed in relative autonomy from other social practices in France.

I am suggesting that ideologies of race, ethnicity and religion also constitute subjectivity by 'hailing' individuals and generating (mis) recognition on the part of subjects. What is (mis) recognized is not the Other but rather oneself as a racial, ethnic, and religious entity existing in a particular relationship to the Other. The specific subjectivity of self, constituted by these ideologies, determines perceptions of the Other. The Other is defined in this process, which in actuality is simultaneous and dialectical; the definition of Self defines the Other and the definition of Other defines the Self. But in the last instance, ideology constitutes the Self before the Self perceives the Other, and the definition of the latter always refers to the relationship between the opposing entities. In colonial situations and others where relations of domination obtain, ideologies of ethnicity and race work by constituting the (dominant) Self through its inversion in the (subordinate) Other. The Other's inversion of 'civilization' permits the colonizing group to recognize itself as the positive opposite of the people it conquers. In the somewhat different context of colonial psychology, Fanon noted the tendency of the *colon* to view the colony in a Manichaean light, with the native representing "not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values" (1963:41). In ideology, then, the Self becomes what the Other is not and vice versa. Analysis of Orientalist painting requires investigation not only of its presentation of the Muslim but also of its role in the constitution of 'Frenchmen' as an entity existing in opposition to Orientals.

The concept of a French national identity and the tendency for individuals to view themselves as 'Frenchmen' rather than Bretons, Provençals, or residents of particular villages was not strong prior to the nineteenth century and still is not wholly entrenched, as evidenced by the various provincial separatist movements in France. Notions of nationalism and patriotism were important elements in the sometimes difficult struggle of the industrial and landowning bourgeoisie to establish domination over the political process after the 1879 revolution. After the loss of political power by the feudal aristocracy, the French bourgeoisie sought to present itself as the legitimate representative of the nation as a whole; the primary characteristics of bourgeois ideology shifted over time in relation to the degree of hegemony exercized by these classes, but throughout most of the nineteenth century, attempts were made on the one hand to fragment traditional social groups by asserting the primacy of the 'individual', and on the other to unify these disparate, isolated individuals into a 'nation'. This is a simplification, of course, and other factors, such as the presence of foreign armies on French soil in 1792, also encouraged the rise of nationalistic sentiments. Nevertheless, the emergence of a secular, nationalistic French state permitted it to be seen as a neutral agency concerned with the general welfare of the national community and its administration by the bourgeoisie to serve 'national' rather than class interests (Poulantzas 1978:214-16). Notions of nationalism and patriotism first arose during the 1789 revolution and initially were generated in regard to the establishment of revolutionary armies; the military continued to promulgate these ideas throughout the century, with implications for colonial enterprises (Zeldin 1977:6). Nationalistic ideologies also were promoted in the new, secularized schools and through attempts to create a 'national' language after 1789 (Balibar and Laporte 1974).

Orientalist painting had a role to play in the creation of the French 'nation'; employing entrenched notions about the Muslim world, it created through visual representation an entity called 'the Orient'. Because the relationship of this entity to France was one of power and opposition, the French viewer of these works recognized her/himself precisely in what Orientals were not, and in doing so constituted her/himself as a member of a nation of individuals unified by the specific traits of heroism, nobility, and, above all, civilization. The nation also was unified by its historic mission in the Orient. While paintings such as *Revolt in Cairo* and *Capture of the smala* were explicitly nationalistic in their depiction of the heroic behavior of French soldiers, other works emphasizing Muslim barbarism or inhumanity defined the Other in such a way that notions of French heroism, benevolence, civilization, and so on were implicit. The absence of France in the paintings of its colonies did not mean that references to the colonial relationship or to the civilizing mission also were absent from the ideologies present therein.

Orientalism was only one aspect of the production of nationalist ideologies through aesthetics, as a large number of non-Orientalist paintings as well as literature promoted such ideals. Moreover, to insist upon the role of Orientalism in the creation of individual 'Frenchmen' and through this to the attempts of the bourgeoisie to dominate the political process is not to ignore the colonial relationship and the fact that certain images were being produced about Arabs which cannot be reduced to statements about French nationalism. But because of the assymetrical power relationship between the two areas, and the fact that artists belonged to the dominant group, these images did not float in isolation but explicitly or implicitly referred to the French political presence in the Orient. In this sense, ideologies present in Orientalism could operate at a supraindividual level and permit France as a nation to recognize itself as an entity with a specific relationship to the Orient.

The unequal power relationship between France and the Orient made it possible for French artists to select and present Eastern scenes to European viewers; the latter's domination was implicit in the fact that it was the the subordinate group that was being viewed, painted, and defined, and not vice versa. Said (1978) indicates a correspondence between the political appropriation of the Orient by European nations and the appropriation of its images by European literary and artistic figures; similarly, Boime argues that French Orientalist paintings "affirmed pictorially French colonialist policies" (1983:70) through appropriation of Muslim culture and its presentation within a French artistic tradition which insisted upon a conventionalized treatment of subject matter.

In this way Orientalism helped to explain colonization by naturalizing the appropriation of Islamic cultural traits considered interesting or picturesque in France. The naturalization of the colonial relationship through implicit reference to a French presence and the French determination of which Islamic traits were to be appropriated and turned into a spectacle bears upon the contradictions among thematic elements in the paintings. As opposed to internal thematic contradictions, which relate to aesthetic conventions, the apparently contradictory themes of Muslim savagery versus nobility, Algerian violence versus the Maghrebian idyll, and so on, refer to the concrete relationship existing between the two areas and thus to the French view of its presence. While depictions of savagery and violence present an Orient in need of civilization, the paintings expressing nobility or the pastoral idyll present an Orient untouched by Western encroachment, existing happily in pristine purity: the absence in these works is the reality and devastation of the colonial presence. Oriental nobility may also refer to French heroism in that chivalrous honour required a fair fight among equals; Boime notes a connection between the medievalist revival

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manifested in art and literature and the ideologies surrounding French expansionism in the Muslim East (1980:100). Thus, if the savagery/nobility and violence/idyll oppositions found in Orientalism are read as referring to the colonial relationship rather than directly to Muslims themselves, they are not contradictions at all but complementary themes, each in their own way producing or reinforcing colonialist idelogies.

C. Aesthetic Codes and Conventions

Ideologies expressed in aesthetic works generally are modified through and in some cases transformed by aesthetic conventions and codes. Even explicitly propagandistic works, such as those by Gros, Girodet, and others, employed artistic techniques which operated as conventions for presentation of the real. Other depictions of the Orient also were filtered through aesthetic codes established in the art world.

This helps to explain the apparent contradictions found in some of the imagery common in Orientalism. It was noted above that in some paintings rather perverse idealizations of Islamic traits are apparent; in *Sardanapalus*, *Summary execution*, and *The Emir's favourites*, the tyrant or executioner is cruel yet compelling. The white slavery depicted in *The slave market* and *The white slave* is inhumane yet titillating. Even death was seen as arousing in works such as *The sharif's justice* or *Harem execution*.

This idealization of the Orient cannot be attributed to a shift in the ideological perception of the area; Muslims still were presented as violent, cruel, lascivious, and so on, however much these traits were found agreeable. The tendency to eroticize violence relates to the general aesthetic sensibility obtaining throughout the century. Romantic conventions for the aesthetic treatment of themes of power, sex, and decadence were highly influential on Orientalism as well as other genres. Literary and pictorial representations of the Orient were closely linked, with poems and novels inspiring paintings and vice versa; moreover, the works of poets, novelists, and travellers frequently were quoted in Salon reviews of Orientalist paintings (Jullian 1977:56). Hugo's *Orientales* had a profound impact on pictorial treatment of the Orient (Easton 1964:47) and his tendency to present the Orient as a fragmented yet timeless entity is apparent in many Orientalist paintings. In paintings such as *The slave market*, *The snake charmer*, *The Emir's favourites*, *The grande odalisque*, *The prisoner*, and many others, the Orient appears as a generalized sensibility or feeling rather than an area having specific geographical locations and historical periods. The Oriental is anonymous, and time and space irrelevant in these works where the entity called 'the Orient' is held together by the traits of Oriental cruelty, sensuality, violence, religion and, sometimes, the idyll. Thus the East of ancient Egypt and Assyria becomes that of

Harun al-Rashid or Saladin which becomes that of contemporary Constantinople or Algiers.

The romantic interest in sado-masochistic fantasies and in the splendid decay and corruption of past societies created a milieu in which an Orient, already defined by traditional assumptions about its nature, was seen to embody those features. Rather than artists and writers suddenly 'discovering' the East through romanticism, the conventions and sensibility of the latter initiated a specific aesthetic treatment and interpretation of the already-defined area, which tended towards the idealization of 'Oriental' violence, captivity, tyranny, and so forth.

The concept of symbolic condensation, originally formulated by Freud in his dream analysis, has been employed by Balibar (1974) in a study of ideological implications of French literature; the concept is relevant to specific elements found in Orientalism. Condensation means that broad thematic ideas or complexes of ideas may be condensed into metaphoric images. Thus, Oriental violence in all its implications is suggested by the detailed depictions of weaponry found in so many paintings, decadence and stasis by the presence of ruins, savagery by nude blacks and severed heads, idyllic sensuality by white slaves and baths, and so on. What this means is that regardless of the degree of idealization of Oriental traits found in individual works, the presence of certain elements referred to a general body of ideas about the East. *Revolt in Cairo* and *Arab horsemen* *taking away their dead* on the surface present different aesthetic treatments of Arab warfare and savagery; in the first work the action is frenzied and the black and Arab fighters exhibit their ferocity explicitly whereas the French are reasoned but resolute in their heroism. *Arab horsemen*, on the other hand, expresses a melancholy calm with an almost heroic treatment of the defeated Algerians. Yet both works refer to Muslim savagery by the presence of black slaves and fierce-looking Oriental weaponry, and to French heroism, in the first work by the presence of resolute French soldiers in the scene, and in the second by the clean way in which the Arabs were killed and the presentation of the Algerian leader as a noble equal, defeated fairly in battle. In both works the same complex of ideas about France and the Orient is produced, despite differences in treatment. Similarly, notions of Muslim sensuality, captivity, tyranny, and idyllic indolence were condensed into the elements of white nude/black slave, the bath, an opulent indoor setting, and depictions of jewels and hookahs.

Most Orientalist works were painted in a naturalistic style which strengthened the apparent connection between what was painted and 'the real'. The advent of stylistic realism and the *néo-grec* movement after 1850, both of which emphasized 'ordinary' people and everyday scenes, gave even greater credibility to the scenes that were being portrayed. This applied as well to more obviously imaginative scenes:

Death of Sardanapalus (1827) and *Harem execution* (1880's), the former by a romantic 'master' and the latter by a typical academic painter of medium artistic stature, share the themes of violence, the sensuality of death, and tyranny. *Sardanapalus* purports to depict an historical incident, and while this is idealized, the scene is not presented as one which potentially could occur on a regular basis. *Harem execution*, on the other hand, by virtue of the extremely naturalistic style and anonymity of the characters is more generalized and appears as a possible everyday occurrence typifying life in the seraglio. Less horrific scenes of 'everyday' life, such as *The slave market* or *Young women amuse themselves by fighting* also claim to present ethnographic reality because of their depictions of what was presumed to be ordinary aspects of Oriental life. Boime has made an interesting observation on the evolution of aesthetic styles in regard to Orientalism:

> Significantly, the development of pictorial attitudes moves in tandem with the gradual approproation of one culture by the other. The "mysterious" shadows of Decamp's scenes and the passion for the savage and primitive in Delacroix give way to the more humdrum glimpses of Near Eastern and North African life in the work of Fromentin and Gérôme. The changing image of Abd el-Kader, evolving in the French imagination from fierce warrior to venerable sage actually traces the realization of French supremacy in Algeria. The prosaic, commonplace scenes of Gérôme similarly show the cultural assimilation and offer us the spectacle of Parisians in turbans and veils (1983:69-70)

The tendency of Orientalists to paint white harem women also helped to naturalize an imaginary Orient; as noted, genuine harems were relatively inaccessable, and painters relied on stereotypes derived from the pervasive, centuries-old horror and titillation surrounding the Muslim enslavement of Christians. While it was a convention to paint celebrated women *en sultane* or dressed as Classical figures, as in Chassériau's *Interior of a Constantine harem*, where the model was the actress Alice Ozy (Sandoz 1974:289), the many works employing anonymous French models created a skewed, romantized vision of Eastern harems peoples by nublile white women and cruel, dark-skinned tyrants. That Gérôme commonly used Parisian models for his beautiful, captive harem women (Ettinghausen 1972:24) and that the model for Landelle's *Fellah woman*, of which twenty versions were sold, was a Norman woman (Lethève 1968:141), reinforces preconceived notions structuring perceptions of the East and of France's relationship to it.

D. Conclusion

The popularity of Orientalism suggests that it was effective at some level in provoking recognition of the veracity of its images. The meanings it produced in conjunction with other aesthetic products, such as poems, novels,and travel diaries on the one hand, and 'official' views of France's relationship to the Muslim world on the other, helped to promote a sensibility in which the invasion and occupation of Islamic lands was not only thinkable, but considered necessary, as a mission in the service of humanity, a *noblesse oblige* made incumbent by French civilization. The difficulties France experienced when going through the decolonizing process during this century, particularly in regard to Algeria, points to the continued efficacy of ideologies generated in the nineteenth century and earlier.

By extending aspects of Althusser's formulation of ideology and its application in studies of aesthetic production, it has been possible to elucidate the process by which Orientalism 'worked' to constitute racial and ethnic ssubjectivities andhelp explain the colonial experience. It has been argued here that ideologies of ethnicity and 'culture' work primarly not by propogandistic images of the Other but through an unconscious constitution of the Self through the Other; the Self is created through what the Other is not and vice versa. Within ideology, this recognition of Self often becomes a profound misrecognition, and the recognition of the Other implies a similar misrecognition. In this way dualist ideologies can occur, in which issues of race or ethnicity are seen in a Manichaean light and 'we' possess all positive qualities and 'they' are seen as barely human. The French interpretation of all Algerian resistance as Muslim fanaticism was more than a cynical excuse for massacre and implies a complex process whereby such beliefs are internalized. This analysis offers suggestions as to the nature of that process.

Second, analysis of Orientalist works has revealed that traditional symbols and notions of the Muslim world, deeply entrenched in the French consciousness, were employed by artists. New interpretations of the images of the Orient which had remained constant for centuries occurred, with paintings idealizing Islamic traits and/or presenting these as an explanation for the new relationship that was taking place between the two areas. This suggests that changes in concrete situations need not lead to changes in imagery; rather, new interpretations tend to gravitate towards old images, at least in the case of Orientalism. The ways in which these images were condensed indicates that various stylistic approaches are less relevant to the meanings produced in artwork than the subject matter itself.

Third, an attempt was made to suggest the complexity of the role of art in the ideological production of meaning. Painting was not only articulated with other aesthetic products, but with a wide range of ideologies existing in regard to many aspects of French society and its relation to the Muslim world. Moreover, the production of art occurred within a complex of apparatuses connected to the State and to the shifting class alliances apparent during the period. It has been argued that art cannot be analyzed in isolation from the social context in which it is produced, but attention also must be directed to aesthetic conventions and sensibilities and to the effects of the artpiece both in terms of producing meanings and in regard to the viewer's intervention in its interpretation.

A final comment is in order regarding the question of consumption of Orientalism. As noted, during the nineteenth century the French government bought Orientalist works for public buildings and national museums or commissioned paintings of military victories in Algeria. Other works were purchased by the French bourgeoisie; Jullian notes the tendency for Suez shareholders to buy desert scenes, colonial officers scenes of mounted Arabs, and rich bachelors depictions of harem life (1977:77). During the twentieth century, many Orientalist works fell in popularity along with other French academic paintings.

Recently, however, there has been a flurry of interest in Orientalism, with Parisian galleries such as Soustiel launching exhibitions of Orientalist painters in 1975 and 1882, and other sales taking place in London and in North America. The primary buyers of French Orientalism today are wealthy Arabs, who particularly like the work of Gérôme, Chassériau, Delacroix, and Fromentin (Boime 1982:71). (Boime also notes that the *Time* magazine issue dealing with the rise of the Ayatollah Khomeini reproduced Gérôme's *Call to Prayer* on its front cover, thus affirming a traditionalist view of Islam (ibid.:72)). It would be of interestr to trace the popularity of Orientalism into this century and particularly to address the ideological implications of recent interest in Orientalist works by the ruling elite in several Muslim countries. If the arguments advanced in this study are correct, it would seem that recent political and economic changes in Middle Eastern social formations has produced a situation in which ruling factions need to construct and affirm an 'Arab' identity through self-recognition in Orientalist paintings. It is a final irony that these pople would select essentially colonialist images with which to define themselves.

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VIII. Appendix: Sources of Plates

1. Musée de Versailles
   In: Escholier 1936

2. Detroit Institute of Arts
   In: Brown University 1982:25

3. Musée de Louvre
   In: Verrier 1979

4. Musée de Louvre
   In: Jullian 1977:46

5. Musée de Louvre
   In: Jullian 1977:83

6. The Wallace Collection, London
   In: Verrier 1979

7. Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne
   In: Jullian 1977:138

8. Wallace Collection, London
   In: Verrier 1979

9. Musée de Versailles
   In: Jullian 1977:123

10. Musée de Louvre
    In:Sandoz 1074:289

11. Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge (Mass.)
    In: Sandoz 1974:317

12. Unknown
    In: Lassaigne 1950

13. Waters Art Gallery, Baltimore
    In: Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978:366

14. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes
    In: Jullian 1977:65

15. Musée de Louvre
    In: Verrier 1979

16. Musée de Louvre
    In: Philadelphia Museum of Art 1978:305

17. Musée de Louvre
    Verrier 1979

18. Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown (Mass.)
    In: Verrier 1979

19. Unknown
    In: Fine Art Society 1978:63

20. Unknown
    In: Fine Art Society 1978:7

21. Ancien Musée du Luxembourg, Paris
    In: Jullian 1977:87

22. Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown (Mass.)
    In: Verrier 1979

23. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes
    Verrier 1979

24. Collection Roger-Viollet, Paris
    In: d'Huart and Tazi 1980:156

25. Collection E. Moreau, Paris
    In: Soustiel and Thornton 1975